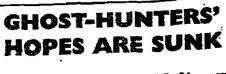
What they're saying about Short, Harman and Beckett.

NEWS, PAGE 6

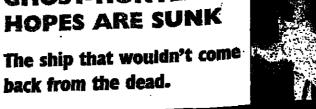


DARLING WALLIS: A KING'S FAVOURITE

Intimate pictures from the royal family album.



PAGE 3





Red card for worst judge in Britain'

y Jason Bennetto rime Correspondent

he man voted the "worst judge 1 Britain" made legal history esterday by resigning after a reort concluded that his conduct ad weakened "public confience in the whole judicial rocess"

The decision by Sir Jeremih Harman, 67, to stand down rom his £112,011 job as a High 'ourt judge follows a controersial career, which has seen ae of the judiciary's most seior members regularly criticised or being rude and a bully. Fifen of his judgments are curent being challenged in the ourt of Appeal.

It is believed to be the first me that a High Court judge as resigned after criticism, nd his departure raises quesons about who polices the 00 High Court judges. Only arliament can sack a judge, allough this power has never een used,

Three Court of Appeal idges vesterday published a amning report of Mr Justice an's treatment of a farmer ankrupted by a confidence fickster, who was kept waiting or 20 months before judgment as given in his negligence acon against accountants.

Some lawyers were so conerned at the amount of time ne judge was ruminating on the ase that they contemplated iking out an insurance policy a case he died.

Mr Justice Harman conacted the Lord Chancellor af-- hearing his fellow judges' ical comments and told him is intention to resign from

ril. Lord Irvine accepted resignation and a stateent from the Lord Chancelr's Department said he was gremely concerned" about e lengthy delays in giving igment. He added that he had

noted the comments of the aparising from allegations that acpeal judges and "shares their

Lords Justice Peter Gibson, Brooke and Munmery ordered a retrial of the farmer Rex Goose's case after hearing that Mr Justice Harman had forgotten large parts of the essential facts and evidence in the case by the time he came to give judgment. They accused him of making incorrect statements and mistakes in the judgment.

The case began on 7 June 1994 and legal argument ended on 13 July. It was then that the wait for judgment - one of the longest on record - began.

When be finally delivered he dismissed the case. Mr Goose, a farmer of Spalding, Lincolnshire, had claimed damages

> The world according to Mr Justice Harman



"Who is Gazza? Isn't there an operetta called La Gazza Ladra?"

"I've always thought there were only three kinds of women: wives, whores and mistresses."

On Oasis: "! certainly have not heard of the band."

countants involved in the purchase of farm property in France had been in breach of their duty of care for ownership of property and had acted deceitfully. Lord Justice Peter Gibson

said in his judgment yesterday: "The court is driven to take this exceptional course [a retrial] on the ground that a substantial miscarriage of justice would be occasioned to Mr Goose by allowing the judge's decision to

He added: "Conduct like this weakens public confidence in the whole judicial process. Left unchecked it would be ultimately subversive of the rule of law. Delays on this scale cannot and will not be tolerated. A situation like this must never occur again.

The resignation ends a 16year career as a High Court judge, in which Mr Justice Harman gained notoriety for his ignorance of the wider world. He famously claimed to be unaware of the existence of Paul Gascoigne, Bruce Springsteen and Uasis. And he once told a woman witness who wanted to be referred to as Ms: "I've always thought there were only three kinds of women: wives, whores and mistresses."

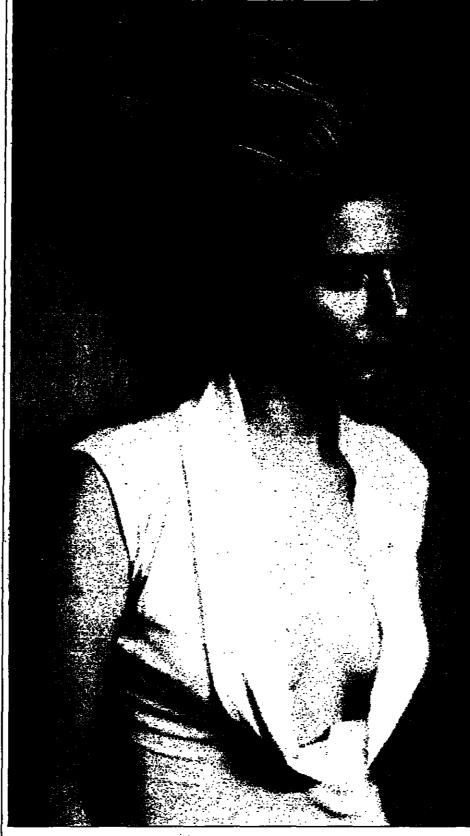
Legal Business, the magazine which carried out the poll in which he was voted the profession's least favourite judge in three separate years, also dubbed him "dreadfully rude, discourteous, bullying ... very unpredictable and nasty", although it noted his intellectual capacity. The magazine's deputy editor, Sarah Marks. said Mr Justice Harman was not the only case of a poor judge.

She said: "Bad teachers can be sacked and bad doctors struck off. But judges seem to

go on for eyer and ever." Horrible Harman, page 3 | photographer of the year. Sheridan Morley

Winners for pictures... and words

No 3,534



The Independent has received more commendations than any other national newspaper in this year's Nikon Press Awards, the most prestigious photographic competition in Britain. The iudges commended six Independent photographers across four categories features, fashion, sport and press

won the fashion award with this shot. In the World Press Awards, announced yesterday, the Independent on Sunday won the award for best arts picture. The prize capped a triumphant 24 hours for the Independent on Sunday which on Thursday was named Environmental Newspaper of the Year in the British Environment and Media Awards. Further images, page 14

Pro-lifers put stop to the abortion pill

By John Lichfield and jeremy Laurance

PRODUCTION of the abortion pill, mifepristone, used by thousands of women in Britain, has been suspended and existing supplies will last only until

the end of the year. The pill, which also has potential as a contraceptive and as a possible treatment for breast cancer, has fallen victim to opposition from pro-life groups which believed, wrongly, that it opened the way for do-it-your-

self abortions. Hoechst, the giant German pharmaceutical company, ordered a French subsidiary to halt manufacture last year, partly as a result of threats by anti-abortion groups to boycott its other products. Sensitivity over the drug restricted promotion which in turn damaged profits. However, it emerged yesterday that the president of Hoechst, Wolfgang Hilger, is himself an opponent of abortion and had worries about the ethics of the drug.

Hoechst has transferred the patent rights to Dr Edouard Sakiz who was a member of the team which discovered the drug in 1982. He hopes to reach agreements with a number of small companies to resume production but several large companies have already turned him down because they do not wish to become a target for the pro-life lobby.

Dr Sakiz, who has formed a new company, Exelgyn, specifically to market mifepristone, formerly known as RU 486, told

déclaration

the French newspaper Libération yesterday that existing stocks for Britain, Sweden and France - the only European countries which authorise the use of the drug - will run out next winter. However, a spokeswoman for Exelgyn in the UK claimed a deal with a manufacturer had now been done and production was expected to resume in the autumn.

The pill has been a constant target of anti-abortion groups. Although it is legal in the US, it is not on sale there. The result is that it has never attained widespread use, despite its impressive potential. Part of the reason is that people thought that swallowing a pill opened the way to simple, do-it-yourself abortions at home. In fact, Mifepristone takes four to six hours to work and can only be taken under medical supervision in an abortion clinic, in case of side effects.

In 1996, it was used in 9,715 abortions in the UK, less than 6 per cent of the total. Surveys show up to a third of women would choose the drug if offered it but it has never been widely promoted.

Mifepristone is also being researched as an emergency contraceptive, as a male contraceptive, and as a trea ment for breast cancer and the bowel condition Crohn's disease.



Clinton under pressure to delay Iraq strike

John Carlin Mashington

th the US Congress divided r military action against i, the American public unpared and the military uninced the White House inder pressure yesterday to er an aerial strike and reble efforts to find a diplofic solution to the impasse President Saddam Hus-Washington's hopes in-

Today's news

leat records melt

FOP temperature of 19.6C

the yesterday the hortest

wuary day on record. Parts Britain were warmer than

south of France. Page 3

he Ulster peace process de-

tiorated into a dispute over

bether the IRA carried out

o killings and whether Sinn

n should be thrown out of

lster wrangle

Baghdad by the UN Secre-

Officials in Washington,

While sources close to the negotiations in Washington said

creasingly rest on a mission to it was likely that Mr Annan tary-General, Kofi Annan.

London, Paris and Moscow, as well as their representatives in the UN Security Council, were in urgent and constant communication yesterday, struggling to come up with a mandate for Mr Annan on which they could all agree.

would travel to Baghdad, alternative diplomatic routes having all but reached a dead end, such a mission was not perceived to be risk-free.

Mr Annan could achieve a breakthrough; he could return to New York empty-handed; but the worst outcome, according to the sources, would be for him to reach an agreement with President Saddam that would be unacceptable to

Britain and America. In such an event the divisions within the UN would become wider and more acrimonious. "If the Secretary-General

goes to Baghdad," said a source, "he must do so with a mandate constrained by the sharp red lines set down down by those parties with forces on the ground."

Yet those in the US camp who are drawing the red lines

wide between the political objectives sought by Washington and London and the military possibilities on the ground.

A US officer quoted in the New York Times said he doubted any air plan that would consist of just "putting boles in the desert". Far worse, other officers said, was the prospect of putting holes in Iraqi women and children. The mood in the

the two main parties state their support for the President, the rank and file, responding to the mood among a sceptical electorate, refused unanimously to support a resolution backing the use of force against Iraq.

Curt Weldon, a Republican on the House of Representatives National Security Committee, spoke for many colleagues when he said: "Joe Six-US Congress, meanwhile, is pack is not convinced about acknowledge that the gap is hesitant. While the leaders of what we're doing over there."



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and leading independent perfumeries.

It's time to massacre St Valentine's Day end of National Marriage Week. In-

By Steve Boggan

When, in AD240, they clubbed Valentine to death, they knew what they were doing. The only problem was, they then went and made him a saint and named a day in his honour.

As a result, people who don't love each other are forced to buy flowers they can't afford, eat at expensive restaurants with lots of other couples who can't stop pawing each other and send expensive

cards bearing untrue greetings. Today is St Valentine's Day. It is also National Impotence Day and falls at the

evitably, it provides the excuse for a thousand surveys which turn up "findings" on love, marriage and romance.

Did you know we will spend £22m on flowers today? (Flowers and Plants Association). Or that almost 25 per cent of marriage proposals are made in bed? (Definitive Guides). Or that Arsenal supporters are more likely to receive a Valentine's Day card than any other team's fans? (The Royal Mail). Or that men are more likely to be given a power drill or DIY tool than a romantic present? (Variety Club Gold Heart Appeal).

Valentine's Day is more and more commercialised, with social pressures being brought to bear on men, in particular, to be seen to be romantic.

Fantastic then, given that failure to gain an erection is often brought on by pressure, that St Valentine's Day has been chosen as National Impotence Day. The Impotence Association has given way to the inevitable and adopted 14. February after a private clinic named the day and was bombarded by the media, which found the timing irresistible. "It attracted a lot of attention, so we endorsed it this year," said Ann Craig, the

association's director. "We're bringing in extra staff for our helpline to handie the extra calls. We don't mind marking St Valentine's Day if it helps."

For men with no such problems, romance comes with mountains of bouquets, bunches and blooms including ? million roses. But odds are they won't be English roses. Because of the St Valentine's demand for them, nearly all are imported, so those you give to your lover were probably grown in Colombia, India, Israel, Kenya or Zimbabwe.

The Impotence Association helpline

INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 . CROSSWORDS, TIME OFF P28 AND THE EYE . TV, THE EYE .GAZETTE, P22 . LETTERS, P20 . FULL CONTENTS, P2 Page 2

Blair reaches out to Clarke and Heseltine

By Fran Abrams Political Correspondent

Tony Blair's aides have established links with senior Tories Kenneth Clarke, Michael Heseltine and Lord Hurd to form a cross-party "Patriotic Alliance" to campaign for a single currency, it emerged last

The move is just the latest illustration of the Prime Minister's plan to break down political boundaries and to form closer relationships with likeConservative and Liberal De- ber of meetings and contacts liance in a speech, which was

Already the Liberal Democrats have a seat on a Cabcommittee constitutional reform, and although the Conservative Europositives have no intention of quitting their party they too may be keen to move closer to the

Conservative and Labour politicians and businessmen have met on several occasions for dinner or drinks.

"Under the auspices of third

and they are starting to thicken up now," one source said.

"Good channels of communication have been opened up across the political divide, for everyone to let each other know broadly what they are doing."

The contacts, which have

taken place between intermediaries so far, are aimed at setting up a co-ordinating group through which both Conservative and Labour enthusiasts can co-operate in a referendum.

Last month Mr Blair made

Conservative dissidents including Mr Clarke and Mr Hesel-

Now aides to Mr Clarke, Mr Heseltine and Lord Hurd are believed to have met Government representatives to discuss the plans. The existing campaign group the European Movement has been suggested as a possible body to oversee the new links.

A cabinet-type committee had been suggested, but the

political difficulties in joining have caused a row within their named as likely participants.

Euro-sceptic Conservatives she was not aware of any plan seemed to be distancing themselves from reports that they, too, were setting up a cross-party campaign with the support of

Former Prime Ministers Baroness Thatcher and John Major, Tory former leader of the Lords Lord Cranborne, former SDP leader Lord Owen,

greeted with caution by senior such a group because it would alist Lord Hanson were all

The revelation came as for Lady Thatcher's office said ready for take-off.

"If they are going to launch a group, I don't see her playing an active, organisational role or anything like that but, obviously, strongly about," he said.

Asked if Lady Thatcher might play a figure-head role, the spokesman said: "At the moment I don't know. We would

Shore and millionaire industri- have to wait." Lord Shore was not willing to comment today, while Lord Cranborne was out But yesterday a spokesman of the country and a source

not aware of such a plan. Lord Owen said he would take an active role opposing a single currency, but gave no hint of joining any such campaign.

John Redwood, the Euro-Sceptic former Conservative Cabinet minister, said that instead of campaigning the Prime Minister should make his mtentions clear on the single

"Mr Blair leaves the country plunged in uncertainty. He won't tell us what his intentions are for the next election maniclose to John Major said he was festo on this crucial subject" he

, Fiona Bran

There were also reports last night that Norman Lamont. the former Chancellor, was expecting to enter the House of Lords this year as well as standing for a seat in the European

Mr Lamont has also just taken on the chairmanship of Con-



Threats throw peace process into turmoil

By Kim Sengupta in Belfast

THE NORTHERN Ireland peace talks were in turmoil last night with bitter recriminations, threats of renewed bombing campaigns, warnings of legal actions, but no sign of a compromise.

As the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, Taoiseach Bertie Abern and President Bill Clinton were Fein from the peace talks could

all dragged into the deepening crisis, the key words in Belfast appeared to be "incontrovertible evidence".

That is what Sinn Fein and the Social and Democratic labour Party (SDLP) were saying that the Royal Ulster Constabulary must provide of IRA involvement in two murders before the expulsion of Sinn

be considered under the Mitchell peace principles.

The day's drama began with the announcement that the Chief Constable of the RUC, Ronnie Flanagan, had told the Government that the IRA was involved in the murder of loyalist Bobby Dougan and drug dealer Brendan Campbell. Mr Blair had already spoken

to Mr Ahern about the matter on Thursday night in a 15minute telephone call, soon after Mr Flanagan had passed on his views to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam. This was followed by another 15-minute call to President Clinton at the White

House by Mr Blair . Yesterday, during a visit to Mowlam said "The integrity of after serving a "suspension". the talks process and the com-

mitment to exclusively peaceful means are paramount and all parties must be treated fairly and equally." Ms Mowlam refused to be drawn on whether she considered the available evidence to be "incontrovertible" simply adding that London and

Dublin would "very carefully"

consider the situation with the

other parties to the talks. Unionist politicians were demanding that Sinn Fein should be kicked out of the talks, just as the Ulster Democratic Party were after one of its linked organisations, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, had admitted responsibility for the murders of three Catholics.

The UDP, it has been indicated by the government, would Enniskillen in the Province. Ms be allowed back into the talks But Ulster Unionist leader

David Trimble questioned whether Sinn Fein should ever be let back into the peace process having "twice dishonoured it" with the breaking of the first ceasefire and now the alleged murders. MP Jeffrey Donaldson of the UUP warned that his party would consider asking for a judicial review of the matter if

effective action was not taken. But Sinn Fein emphasised that the RUC had not provided any evidence to link their "inflammatory" claims of IRA responsibility for the murders and repeated the warning by president Gerry Adams that without his party's involvement in the talks there would be no peace.

Asking for Mr Flanagan to provide "incontrovertible evidence", as it had been the case with the UDP's expulsion, chairman Mitchell McLaughlin

said: "If can be demonstrated that my party dishonoured or broke any of the commitments, fair enough, treat us as you'd any other party in similar circumstances. But that evidence, if it wouldn't stand up in a court of law, could hardly justify

throwing my party out of

The RUC were questioning

negotiations."

10 people after the shooting of Mr Dougan, a prominent member of the Ulster Defence Association. Out of those only three are now left in custody, and it is possible that if there is not enough evidence to continue holding or charging them they will be released on Sunday night, before the talks move onto Dublin the following day, where the future of Sinn Fein in the peace process will be decided.

Atlantic chart, noon today

MONDAY'S INDEPENDENT

SPORT

A night at the races with Sheik Mohammed

MEDIA+

Kirsty Young: Headline news

THE EYE

Irvine Welsh: From Trainspotting to playwriting

Deborah Ross meets Mosley star Jonathan Cake

CONTENTS 10-14 Features 15-16 Leader & letters 20 2 Comment Obituaries 22 Business 24-25 Shares 23 Time Off Crosswords 28 & ISM page 52 TV & radio The Eye



Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw mation ial for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

URGENT APPEAL EARTHQUAKE IN **AFGHANISTAN**

Last week an earthquake killed over 4000 people in the Takhar Province of Afghanistan. Today thousands more are suffering in sub-zero temperatures - without shelter, warmth, medical supplies or clean water.

Despite the terrain, weather, and on-going civil war, a Red Cross land convoy and two Red Cross flights have already arrived in the region. But additional supplies are desperately needed to prevent further

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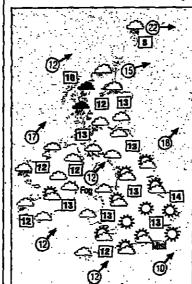
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WEATHER

The British Isles, noon today



General summary and outlook: The north and north-west of Scotland will have yet more heavy rain but the Northern Isles will turn showery. South-west Scotland will have sporadic drizzle, mostly near the coasts, but eastern Scotland is going to brighten up after early rain. Northem tretand and the north-west of England and Wates will be dull with drizzle in places, mostly near western coasts. Remaining parts of England and Wales will have a pleasant, dry day with long sunny breaks after early mist or fog has cleared. Rain will push southwards into Wales and northern England by early Sunday, then across the rest of England and Wales later in the day. That will herald a cooler Monday and Tuesday but most places will see some sunshine. A few showers are possible down the east coast and over the north and west of Scotland. Steadier rain will move back into Scot-

most except analybide Signeral moon local time: c.C.Couchy. Chair, lig.Cog. In: Nazzy, m.mist, c.ram, cn., smoon, c., senney, ith, thunder s 12 54 Inversess c 14 57 Oxford c 13 55 lpswich t 14 57 Plymon e 14 57 Cardiff e 13 55 Cork m 12 54 I. of Scilly fg 10 58 Scarboroughe 13 55 c 13 55 Dever c 15 59 Jersey Birmingham s 15 59 s 15 59 Liverpool m 12 54 Blackpool f 11 52 Edinbur Bournemouths 12 54 Exeter Edinburgh m 13 55 Landon s 16 61 Seathead c 15 58 m 13 55 Manchester s 14 57 St Andrews c 14 57 Glasgow

¢ 13 55 Newcastle 1 15 59 s 16 61 Guernsey s 11 52 Nottingham s 15 59 Lighting-up times __17.31 to ___17.20 to ___17.25 to ___17.21 to ___17.15 to ___17.19 to ___17.12 to ___17.12 to 7.43 7.22 7.23 7.40 7.13 7.26 7.27 7.46 7.24 7.25 7.42 7.15 7.28 7.29 7.21 ..17.23 ...17.18

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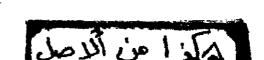
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AA Roadwatch

London, A1 between Mill Hill Circus and Fiveways Corner. Roadworks and restric-tions. Until May 31. London A3211 Blackfriars Underpass. Contraflow. Until April 15. Buckinghamshire, M48 J1a-J3. Road-works and contrallow. Until 1999. Kent M2 J5-7 Bridge maintenance & restrictions. Until March 9. Bristol. M5 J18j-19. Major roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until Jan 99. West Yorks: M1 J43-42 Stourton to Loftspeed limit are in place. Until July 13, Cornwall, A38 Bodmin Parkway Station luming. Contration. Until June 1. Somerset, M5 J22-J23, Major roa works & contrailow, Until March 31. Cambs, A1 Alconbury to Haddon, Con-struction work, Until December 31 1998. Suffolk A12 between Kessingland and Wrentham. Restrictions until March 3. Derbystire, A38 South Normanion, Major roadworks. Until March 1. Laicestershire, M1 J24, Northbound exil slip closed. Use J23a, Until April 13. Merseyside A57. Knowstey. Roadworks at M57 Junction. Until Dec 31 1998 North Yorks, A1 Aberford to Gartorth Roadworks until August 1.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0336 401 for the latest local and redional traffic news. Source: The Automotrile Association. Calls charged at 39p per min (cheap rate) 49p per min (alt oper times) inc VAT.

Sun and moon



*Records melted by February heatwave

By Kate Watson-Smyth

IN MANY parts of Britain, yesterday was the hottest February day since records began. Temperatures soured to 19.1C in London and Barbourne, Worcestershire, recorded the hottest February day ever, with 19.6C registered at 3pm, beating southern France which reached a high of 18C.

It was the same over most of the country as Edinburgh, Glasgow and Birmingham all broke their records for the time of year with temperatures around 16C. The average temperature in February is around 6C.

In Blackpool, ice-cream vans cruised the promenade as children built sandcastles on the beach which was crowded with sunbathers.

At Chester Zoo, an extra admission gate had to be opened to cope with the hordes of people taking advantage of the unseasonal weather.

Chris Vere, a spokesman for the zoo, said: "The lovely weather has made the little animals a lot livelier, the lion cubs are dashing around playing and our baby Indian elephant Sithami has been out with her mum.

The weather seems to have brought around 1,000 extra epeople through the gate today." Around the East Anglian

coast, sun-lovers paddled in the sea and lounged on the beach. "There have been people paddling, playing on the beach or just sitting on the sand or the sea wall," said a spokeswoman for the tourist information centre in get a large fall in March and Lowestoft, Suffolk. "The town April so we are hopeful that it has been busy all day with peo- will not be a totally bad season."

ple in short sleeves and one or two in shorts. It's been like a warm spring day.

A spokeswoman for the tourist information centre in King's Lynn, Norfolk, said: "We noticed that all our museums have been very quiet. It's because everyone has headed for the coast at Hunstanton."

The previous record high temperature in Britain during February was at Milford Haven in1972 which notched up 19.4

A spokesman from the Meteorological Office said: "The unusually warm weather is due to warm air coming from north Africa bringing unseasonably high temperatures around 10 degrees higher than normal for this time of year."

The unseasonal weather is expected to continue for the next few days although it will be slightly cooler.

We are not expecting the mperatures to remain quite as high as they are at the moment but it is certainly not going to start freezing," he said.

But the warm weather has caused problems in some Scottish ski resorts where the mild temperatures have caused the snow to melt.

At the Nevis Range ski resort, the highest in the country at 4006ft, there is snow on the higher slopes but visitors were being advised to bring their walking boots as well as ski gear.

Cally Fleming, marketing manager at the range, said: "We are beginning to worry about [the lack of snow] but we often



The ghost ship that refused to come back from the dead

Kathy Marks

looks into the twilight zone of the Goodwins

The Goodwin Sands, three miles off the Kent coast, are a treacherous spot for seafarers. Thousands of ships have been wrecked there over the centuries, many of them sinking without trace, ground to dust by the abrasive sands. Locals call them the Great Swallower.

The sands, often shrouded in mist, have snawned dozens of legends, none more enduring than that of the Lady Lovi-

bund, a three-masted barque that foundered there on 13 February, 1748, and is said to day the 13th, following the reappear in spectral form

And so it was that yesterday, on the ship's 250th anniversary, hotels and boarding houses in Deal were booked solid with ghost-hunters from as far afield as America, Italy and Germany. Thirteen of

on a fishing boat that left Ramsgate at first light on Frisame fateful route as the Lady Lovibund. Andrew Tarbuck, 26, telesales worker from Newcastle, circled the date in his diary two years ago. "I read this

I've been fascinated by it ever since," he said. According to the version them managed to secure places related by George Goldsmith-

Carter, a former lightship crewman, in his 1953 book, The Goodwin Sands, the Lovibund was sent to its watery grave by John Rivers, the first mate, as it set sail for Oporto. The ship's master, Simon Reed, had just got married, unaware that Rivers, his best man, was con-

story when I was a child, and sumed by unrequited passion for his new wife. As they approached the sands, Goldsmith-Carter wrote, Riversdelivered

a "crushing blow" to Reed's skull, then took the helm. In the cabin below, the

wedding party was too preoccupied by the festivities to notice the change of course. When the ship crashed into the Goodwins, they were trapped. The Lovibund went down with the loss of all hands.

Aboard the 38-ft Bonaventure, skippered by Allan Booth, expectations were high yesWatching brief: Two of the ghost hunters search the seas, above, for the 'Lady Lovibund'. Glimpsed through the mist ... the Goodwin Sands lighthouse Photograph: Tom Pilston

terday, but no ghostly vessel materialised.

David Collyer, a local historian, believes that the legend has prosaic origins. "The mid-18th century was the height of the Deal smugglers," he said. "How better to keep people away from your nefarious activities ... than to invent a ghost story? We not are talking about spirits of the ethereal kind, but the ones found in bottles."

Few regrets over departure of 'Harman the Horrible'

By Jason Bennetto Crime Correspondent

KNOWN by his victims as "Harman the Horrible", Mr Justice Harman - who regrigned yesterday after unprecedented criticism from fellow judges - is unlikely to be

For the past 16 years, Sir Jeremiah Harman, 67, a senior High Court judge, has been acquiring a reputation as a hectoring bully with little interest in the outside world. News yesterday that he was resigning after a damning report into his handling of a damages case, in which the claimants were kept waiting for 20 months for a de-

critical of conduct which "weakens public confidence in the whole judicial process".

His unpopularity was reflected in being voted as one of the worst judges on the High Court bench in all three surveys of 100 solicitors and barristers by Legal Business magazine. One interviewee said: "He has reached unparalleled depths of awfulness. It is nothing short of an uncomfortable adventure to appear before him, and in terms of delivering justice he is nowhere. He is impolite. He is the judge

I least want to appear in front of." He gained public attention for a num-

cision, was greeted with relief by many
WHAT FELLOW LAWYERS SAID ABOUT HIM
WHAT FELLOW LAWYERS SAID ABOUT HIM

Anonymous lawyers to Legal Business magazine: "Good riddance to bad rubbish."

And "He has reached unparalleled depths of awfulness."

Judgment in the Court of Appeal: His

ber of high-profile gaffes. When the former guards officer was asked if he had heard of the rock group Oasis during a 1996

court bearing, he replied: "I certainly

conduct "weakens public confidence in the whole judicial process".

Male barrister speaking in his support: "I deplore this tendency towards uniformity - there must be room for mavericks."

grant an injunction halting an unauthorised

have not heard of the band. I don't listen to bands."At a hearing during the height of World Cup fever in 1990 when asked to

he a rugby or association footballer? Isn't there an operetta called La Gazza Ladra?"

In 1992, he earned the nickname "the Kicking Judge" after he booted a taxi driver outside his London home under the mistaken impression he was a press photographer.

But it is his treatment of other lawyers that has gained him the greatest notoriety. One said he was "dreadfully rude to people who are junior and inexperienced; discourteous and bullying".

His latest targets have been the new solicitor advocates who have rights of audience in certain cases. The first one to appear

biography of Paul Gascoigne, he said: "Is before the judge was asked to provide a copy of his practising certificate after the inquired loftily: "Who are you?"

He was called to the Bar in 1954 and graduated to the bench along the time-honoured route of Eton, the Coldstream Guards and Lincoln's Inn.

His resignation brought a mixed response from members of the Bar at the High Court yesterday. One woman barrister said: "Good riddance to bad rubbish." But a male colleague countered: "I deplore this tendency towards uniformity. There must be room for mavericks, even on the bench. If they stick to being rude and irascible but

efficient at the same time, it's all right."



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Scientists call for law to stop human cloning

By Nicholas Schoon Philadelphia

BRITAIN'S leading cloning scientist yesterday joined in a call for a legal ban or moratorium on producing cloned children.

But Ian Wilmut, head of the team which produced the cloned sheep Dolly, pointed out that the key technology behind cloning could also produce major benefits in combating lethal diseases.

At the world's premier general science meeting, the annual conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a panel envisaged a world in which cloned children grew up confused as to who they were meant to

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be while lawyers argued and judges puzzled about who their legal parents were.

Dr Wilmut, of the Roslin Institute near Edinburgh, said the overriding question should be: "Is it in the child's interest? My judgement is no." If you combine today's well-

established surrogate birth and in vitro (test tube) fertilisation technologies with tomorrow's potential for cloning, there are no less than 13 different possible combinations of parents for the child produced by such a high-tech union, said Lori Andrews, of the Chicago Kent College of Law. It all depended on what legal definition one

"If Bill Gates created an identical twin [using cloning] a variety of laws might be applied to determine the cloned child's parenthood, with differing re-

In some parts of the United States, the boy's legal parents would actually be the parents of the software billionaire.

If the Gates clone was born of a surrogate mother who rented her womb to him, then in Arizona and Utah the boy would be considered the legal offspring of this woman and her husband.

There's no suggestion Mr Gates is considering cloning himself. In any case, scientists are sure that this would not be possible for at least five to ten years. There are still big questions about the health and viability of farm animals produced by cloning and the success rate is extremely low.

Indeed, there is intense interest amongst scientists as to when any other laboratory will report that it has been able to repeat the cloning Dr Wilmut's team achieved with Dolly.

"I'd need to see herds of

Caplan, director of Pennsylvania University's Centre for Bioethics.

But once it was possible, what would the prospects be for a cloned child, mused the panel From his or her knowledge of his genetically identical parent/twin he or she could guess how tall he/she would grow, and even get some idea of how long he/she might live.

If he was a copy of a vain, wealthy, male high achiever the classic wannabe clonee then the child would grow up with the oppressive knowledge that he was expected to repeat his father/twin's brilliance in sport, business or any other field

As Glen McGee, another University of Pennsylvania hioethicist, said: "They lose their right to an open future." Ronald Cole-Turner, of the

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, a minister of religion, said the churches were opposed to cloning, partly because it appeared to offer nothing to the poor, women and children.

Dr Caplan envisaged what he called "the Woody Allen syndrome" after the film director who has just married his adopted daughter.

If an adoring husband cloned his wife, what would his feelings be towards her child/twin as she grew up, decades younger than his real wife? Would they be those of a parent or a lover?

While President Clinton has banned spending any federal moncy on human cloning, that will not prevent the private sector from forging ahead.

After all, there is a similar ban on federal funding of testtube baby technology, but the US still has nearly 300 private in vitro fertilisation clinics. The

— Judith Judd, Education Editor

healthy, cloned farm animals before I was confident it could be a carefully devised legally enforceable moratorium. done for humans," said Arthur

equal pay to tribunal

A WOMAN teacher will take a case for equal pay to an i

PE teacher takes case for

dustrial tribunal on Monday. Eileen Halloran, 50, a former teacher at the City of London Girls' School, alleges that she was paid less than comparable teachers at the City of London School which educates boys. Ms Halloran, a PE teacher who was employed at the school until December 1995, is a retired member of the 150,000-strong Association of Teachers and Lecturers which is backing her case against the Corporation of London. Yesterday the education authority said it had nothing to add to a statement out our when the case arose in 1995. That said: " ... the fees charged by girls' schools are less than those [of] boys' schools and [so] salaries

Truckers face road blocks

tend to be lower at girls' schools". It accepted that salaries at

the girls' school should be made more competitive, but main-

tained that the position at the two schools was not comparable.

AROUND 100 British lorry drivers were facing the threat of road blocks in Greece last night after angry farmers closed one of the main routes out of the country. The blockade at the Tembi junction, which is the main route for traffic coming into Greece from mainland Europe, has been mounted as part of a domestic dispute over taxation.

Hauliers heading towards southern Europe are being warned by trade body the Freight Transport Association that they may face delays. Farmers' leaders met Greek agriculture ministry officials yesterday but failed to resolve the dispute.

Baby's car death

POLICE have recommended that a couple whose baby son died after falling from their moving car should not face court action over the tragedy. A spokesman for Derbyshire Police said yesterday that the death of 19-month-old Calum Hadley could have been due to a faulty door latch on the Range Rover that Paula Oakley, in her thirties, and Jason Hadley, 26, were travelling in in Allenton, Derbyshire, 11 days ago. A report would be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service, he said.

Paddington Bear in trouble

THE only British factory licensed to make Paddington Bears has closed. Gabrielle Designs, where the bear made famous in Michael Bond's children's books has been made for 25 years, is due to go into liquidation with the loss of 21 jobs. The company, based at Bear Garden in Adwick, South Yorkshire, was founded by Shirley Clarkson, 63, who made the first bears for her children in 1971, and sold in 1995 to Stephen and Lorraine Beau-

Win a weekend in New York

THERE IS still a chance for readers to win a weekend break in New York. To win the prize, which has been arranged with Sky TV to celebrate its new series of Friends, the popular comcdy, you have to tell us why you and a friend deserve a weekend in New York. The flights are courtesy of Virgin Atlantic and you will stay at the Radisson Empire Hotel.

Send your answers on a postcard to Freud Communications, 19-21, Mortimer Street, London W1 N8OX. Answers must be in by Thursday 19 February.



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*Father hopes photofit will trap girl's killer

By Jason Bennetto Crime Correspondent

A PHOTOFIT picture of a man suspected of killing Caroline Dickinson, the teenager who was raped in a French hostel, was released yesterday in Brittany - 19 months after the murder.

Caroline's father, John, who has been highly critical of the police operation, said that he believed that his daughter's killer was still in the area.

Caroline, 13, was raped and murdered in a tiny shared hostel dormitory in Pleine Fougeres, Brittany, while on a trip with Launceston Community College from Cornwall.

The photo image was compiled with the help of some of Caroline's fellow pupils when French detectives visited Launceston earlier this month. The pupils and a teacher are believed to have spotted a man acting suspiciously around the French hostel.

Mr Dickinson, 41, from Bodmin, Cornwall, made his eighth trip to France to attend the police news conference, where the photofit was released.

He said he believed Caroline's killer was "still in the region and keeping low, because until now no one has known what he looked

like, and he has felt able to relax himself". "But he is going to be found out soon because people will recognise this photofit, I am very, very confident about it," Mr Dickinson added.

The photofit was "the sort of face that I am sure will have stuck in people's minds, even though he may have changed his looks from that time", he said.

Mr Dickinson made a personal appeal



The suspect's photo image was released by police in Britanny

to the French public for information, and asked them to look "long and hard" at the photofit and come forward if they recognised the man. He dismissed "negative comments" that there was little chance of

finding the culprit - even with a photofit. "That is not my personal feeling. I think it is a very important new development, and I am sure people will have their memories jogged and come forward," he said.

'It could have been anybody's daughter," said Mr Dickinson, who felt the net was "drawing in" in the search for the killer. The photofit will be distributed to

police stations, petrol stations and post offices across France.

Earlier this week it emerged that the cot-

ton wool gag used to smother Caroline came from another hostel 25 miles away where another British schoolgirl from Salford, Greater Manchester, was attacked earlier that night in July 1996.

But the vital link was only made when the investigation was last year handed over to Judge Renaud van Ruymbeke, who replaced Gerard Zaug, the original investigating magistrate, after criticism from the Dickinson family.

The "intimate knowledge" of the two hostels and possible earlier intrusions at other hostels pointed to someone from the Brittany area being the culprit, said Mr Dickinson.

He claimed that the cotton wool was one factor linking the two attacks and the previous failure to establish that showed Mr Zaug to be "incompetent".

Meanwhile, Mr Dickenson's MP, Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat for North Cornwall, renewed a plea to the Foreign Office for both the British and the French authorities to learn the lessons of the

Both he and the Dickinson family urged the need for Europe-wide standard security arrangements in all hostels for young people, and pointed out weaknesses in the translation arrangements, and the extra difficulties caused by the different police and judicial systems.

Delays, an information blackout, "casual incompetence and a cavalier attitude were the hallmark of the initial investigation," said Mr Tyler.

"Evidence which should have been pursued vigorously in the first 18 days has remained unchecked for 18 months," he



Caroline Dickinson was raped and murdered in a French hostel in 1996

'All-out ban on boxing' if a woman died in ring

By Barrie Clement Labour Editor

The whole sport of boxing might be banned if a female fighter died in the ring, the sport's senior medical adviser said yesterday. Defending the professional boxing authority's refusal to grant Jane Couch a licence, Dr Adrian Whiteson told an industrial tribunal there was no evidence to show women's boxing was safe.

Ms Couch, who became world welterweight champion last year, is accusing the British Board of Boxing Control of sexual discrimination by stopping her earning her living as a professional fighter in her home country. Her fight is being backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Dr Whiteson told the tribunal in Croydon, south London, that he had no objection to women boxing and saw no reason why they should not establish their own professional authority with its own medical ad-

"However, boxing as we know is a highrisk sport which can cause injury and death. Should such a tragedy occur when a woman is boxing. I believe the public adversity would put the whole sport at risk."

Earlier the tribunal heard Dr Whiteson say he considered women in general "too frail" to box because they bruised easily and became emotionally unstable and more accident-prone during menstruation. Another argument by the council is that women might unintentionally box during early stages of pregnancy. Attention is also drawn to some medical opinion which contends that repeated blows to the breast can cause lumps which may turn malignant.

Dr Whiteson, who has 35 years' experience in the sport, confirmed that women were not considered individually by the council; they were banned as a gender.

"We have no evidence to show that women's boxing is safe. We have a totally open mind, but there are doubts and I have to defend the sport of boxing to my peers and to the press."

Ms Couch, 29, known as the "Fleetwood Assassin", was told by Dr Whiteson that she might thank him in the long run. "It is possible that if research proves increased risk to women, we may have done the applicant Park. Last year we asked the Peak Park Au- a great favour." The 10-stone 5ft 7 in boxthority to issue an enforcement notice to conseeing a television documentary about female fighters. She won ber world crown in Copenhagen last May by defeating reigning champion Sandra Geiger. John Warity's move, Backdale would have become ren, chairman of the tribunal, later reserved

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National Park orders company to stop quarrying in Peaks

NATIONAL PARK officials yesterday or- Edge group, said: "We applaed the decidered a halt to quarrying in a top beauty spot. The move followed a meeting of the expansion of this massively destructive quar-Peak District National Park Authority into a proposal from RMC Roadstone to extract a million tons a year of limestone from Backdale Quarry at Longstone Edge, near Bakewell, in Derbyshire.

RMC already has permission to take from Longstone Edge." fluorspar in the area. However, it had also been taking limestone - in breach of its planning permission - and has been served with an enforcement notice.

Local residents and countryside cam-

sion by the park authority in stopping the ry. The decision means that even if the company appeals, they are prevented from further damaging the landscape during the lengthy appeals procedure ... They should accept the decision gracefully and pull out

Elaine Gilligan, quarrying campaigner at Friends of the Earth, welcomed the decision but said: "The Government must change the law to allow the old minerals permissions in environmentally important arpaigners welcomed the decision. Peter eas to be revoked without local authorities Thompson, chairman of the Save Longstone having to pay huge sums in compensation."

tional parks in England and Wales which face more than 100 similar proposals.

RMC which owns the site, said that it would appeal to the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott.

Lawyers for the National Park believe an inquiry could take up to eight months, with no guarantee that it would win. If Mr Prescott ruled in favour of the company, the planning board would have to compensate it for lost mining during that time.

Martin Doughty, a councillor and chairman of the National Park Authority, said: "This has been a very difficult decision. There is no question that we are required

The issue is seen as a test case by 11 na- to protect the environment but, because of en the local and national outrage their acthe complexities of the law and the inter-tions have provoked, we hope they will acpretation of old planning permissions, this is easier said than done. We have had to prepare our case very carefully because we know any enforcement orders may be challenged by RMC. By issuing a stop no-

tice, we could be liable for compensation." The authority has already written to RMC warning them of its intention to issue the enforcement and stop notices. It will now explain in detail why it has rejected the company's proposals and put forward an alternative scheme for restoring the site.

trol the work. It seemed clear then that the existing planning consent only covered vein minerals - not limestone extraction. He added that without the park author-

are proposing."

cept that the original planning permission

did not allow for the kind of extraction they

tection of Rural England, said: "We applaud

this decisive action to protect the National

David Bradley, of the Council for the Pro-

SMALL CHANGE



With effect from 28 February 1998 the old, larger, heavier 50 pence coins will be withdrawn from circulation.





Whispering plot smears female ministers

By Fran Abrams Political Correspondent

A SERIES of whispering campaigns against female Cabinet ministers appeared to be under way last night, with Clare Short, Harriet Harman, Margaret Beckett and even Mo Mowlam suffering from smears.

Although a number of male Cabinet members have also been fingered, attacks on these four have often been of a particularly personal nature.

The revelation comes after comments by Clare Short, the International Development Secretary, to a documentary crew that another member of the Cabinet had lied to a newspaper over remarks she made about parades in Northern Ireland. On the same day there were renewed rumours that Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, was about to be sacked because other ministers have lost confidence in

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, faced whispered claims, apparently from figures in the Unionist camp, that she was not up to her job because of her illness last year. And last week Conservatives were saying they had learned Margaret Beckett might be moved from the Department of Trade and Industry because she was felt to be incompetent.

Such rumours are part of the currency of Westminster life,



Clare Short: 'Outspoken nature Harriet Harman: 'Rumours that Margaret Beckett: 'Tories heard makes her a natural target'

Gavin Strang, the Transport the Cabinet suggested some of speak in a far more personal emotions quite often. "Women Minister, and David Clark, the them were targeted because of way, whereas men deal in the are often criticised for things Chancellor of the Duchy of their more "human" political Lancaster, have also had to

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she is about to be sacked'

ories and practical types of is- men are never criticised for, the styles. One such source said: sues. That can leave women way they look or their rela-Women tend to deal with open to greater criticism, be- tionships." A friend of Clare

Short said she had been con-



she was felt to be incompetent'

leagues for her outspoken re- People know they may well get sponse to these campaigns, which had dogged her since long before she joined the Cabinet.

gratulated by some of her col- she won't sit there and take it. fingered if they have a go at her." Yesterday a Downing Street spokesman defended Ms "If she's being undermined Harman after two newspapers

suggested she was about to be sacked. "The person who knows when there might be a reshuffle is the Prime Minister.

"The Prime Minister believes Harriet Harman is doing a difficult job and doing it well, and he has said that on occasion," he said. Such stories tended to pop up on quiet news days, he added.

Yesterday's Daily Express pointed to tension between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown as a possible reason some of last

week's rumours. Ms Harman was appointed on Mr Brown's advice, it said, and Mrs Beckett was also seen as an ally of the Chancellor.

While Ms Short's outspoken nature often makes her a target, attacks on Ms Mowlam are more likely to be a result of the tightrope she is forced to walk to keep the Northern Ireland peace talks together.

She has been the subject of bitter attacks by Unionists, and there have been tales circulating that she might be given an alternative role in co-ordinating the party message.

However, these stories have been denied by government sources who have said her work in Northern Ireland has been too important and too successful for her to be moved.

Mr Clark and Mr Strang have both been mooted as possible casualties in a summer reshuffle. Mr Clark has complained publicly about smears, though Mr Strang has remained



Tories spent more than £20m in run-up to the election

By Fran Abrams

CONSERVATIVE spending in the run-up to the general election was more than £28m, it was revealed last night, including almost £10m in the last month.

But record donations of E38m meant the party ended the black. Despite election spending well in advance of Labour,

Parkinson, the party chairman, said that even by the end of the £25m". election campaign it had just about managed to break even. It would be "to some extent an intrusion" if political parties had their national spending on elec-

tions limited, he added. The Central Office accounts revealed the party had a "record surplus" of £7.4m at the end of the party's financial year which closed on 31 March, just before the final weeks of the election.

But, Lord Parkinson said, if next six weeks, that cash disap-C7m surplus in March, 1997. six weeks after this, a further up to the The party's annual report £10m was spent, which brought and accounts, published last the cost of the general election night, does not give any list of to £28.3m," he said. He preit had spent "something like

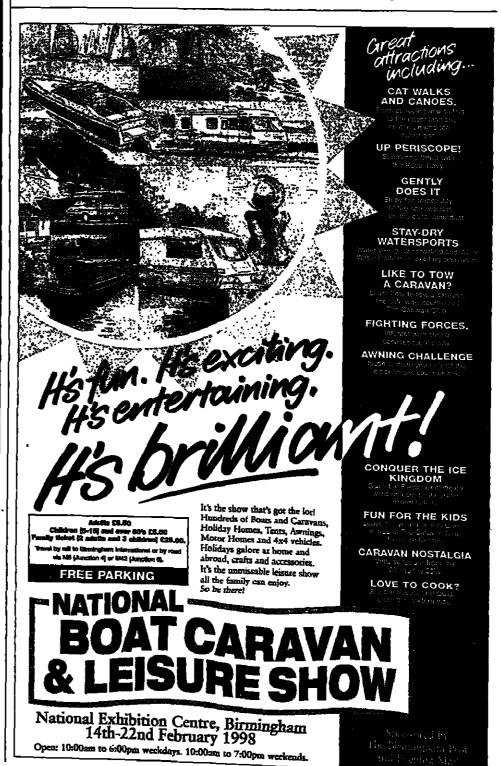
> He also confirmed the Tories' total election bill included paying £13m to the advertising company M & C

Given the result on 1 May and Labour's crushing election victory. Lord Parkinson joked: "I think M & C Saatchi had a good election."

Labour last night responded to the Tory accounts by calling for the party to say how it the accounts had run to 1 May managed to find so much mon-1996-7 financial year in the itself, "the picture would have ey to fight the election cambeen totally different. In the ... paign. A senior Labour spokesman said: "Two years which managed £27m over the peared. Six weeks to the general before the election, the Tories two and a half years leading to election had consumed most of had a debt of nearly £20m. 1 May last year, the Tories had our cash. In the course of the Now they tell us that in the run-£28m. So where did they get the £48m from? That is a monumental sum. They clearly have its donors, large or small. Lord dicted Labour would announce something very serious to hide.

Labour publishes details of its major donors, and the Liberal Democrats have announced plans to do so.

Lord Neill is looking at the issue as part of a review of party funding.



By Matt Rodda

A CONSERVATIVE education authority is planning to fund a number of pupils at independent schools despite the scrapping of the nation-wide assisted places scheme by the Government

Surrey County Council's education committee has drawn up the scheme to help about 100 a gifted pupils go to independent secondary schools from September.

A further 1,000 pupils would remain in state schools but attend master classes in partic- Surrey if the Government ular subjects run by teachers from independent schools.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, called on David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, to legislate to block the plan. The move follows the Government scrapping the Assisted Places Scheme run by the Conservative administration which helped 38,000 pupils a

Money from the scheme is to pay for class sizes in primary schools to be kept under a maximum of 30 children.

On Thursday, the Government announced the areas where the first £22m would be private schools." spent. It has also called on independent schools to share facilities with the state sector to Mr McAvoy called on him to increase opportunities for all

Under the Surrey scheme the council would pay inde-pendent schools the £1,700 per head that it would normally spend on sending the pupils to state secondary school. The rest of the cost of educating reducing class sizes, he said. It them would be covered by a had no objection to individuals trust and parental contribu- or companies raising funds to tions based on family income. pay for pupils to attend inde-

Families would be assessed by a means test and the scheme would only be available to parents with a joint income of under about £30,000 a-year. The trust would be set up with against the will of the Governan initial £50,000 from the council, and contributions from

parents and business. Dr Andrew Povey, chair- have seen them," he said.

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man of Surrey education committee, said he did not know why Mr McAvoy wanted "to

"This is a very exciting

He added: "I think parents go to independent schools.

Dr Povey said that subjects Japanese that were not normally provided in state schools. He hoped that 14 independent schools would be able to initially

However, Mr McAvoy said the council was taking public money out of state schools, and called for a "loophole in the law" to be closed. "I am sure the majority of parents would want to see every penny raised through their rates spent in their local schools, not subsidising some children to attend

The union had discussed the issue with Mr Blunkett and legislate to "prevent this re-creation of the Assisted Places Scheme by other means".

Mr Blunkett would not be drawn on Mr McAvoy's call. The Government's priorities for local education authorities were raising standards and endent schools

orities of raising standards and cutting class sizes is doing so ment. We will look at Surrev

remove choice" from parents.

scheme which will benefit many children. It is designed to follow on and improve on the assisted places scheme. We hope reciprocal links will also benefit teachers from both sectors," Dr Povey said.

will really go for this scheme, 20 per cent of children in Surrey There would be a reaction in stopped the council."

where master classes would be held could include those like participate in the scheme.

"Any local authority diverting money from our main pri-County Council's proposals and make a judgement when we



Looking out: Thomas Harding, joint head of the Oxford Channel, at home in the city; the idea is, he says, to get the community involved in programming Photograph: Tom Pilston

Studio in a bedroom brings television revolution

Media Correspondent

IN A back bedroom in Oxford

this week a small television revolution was under way that involved no digital hype, no media moguls and no extra charge to the viewer.

Because this week the first of 4 approved city-wide television business as the Oxford Channel. It is a station that will be free to air, will need no retuning, cable or satellite link, and will sit at Channel 6 on 300,000 buttons only in the university City. It was created by a clause hid-

ing Bill which was largely ignored by the big boys and which allowed for the setting up of something called Restricted Service Licences for Location (RSLL). Using small holes in the ex-

den away in the last broadcast-

isting broadcast spectrum and local transmitters, 31 RSLLs will be created over the next year or so. Most of them will just air a franchises opened its doors for teletext-style service of local news and "what's-on" information. The Oxford Channel however wants to go further.

When it launches in the autumn it plans six hours a day of programmes. These will be made by a paid staff of 30 and fancy their chances in television. "For the first time we are re-

ally giving people access to the airwaves," said Thomas Harding, joint managing director of Oxford Broadcasting Limited.

We will have television professionals overseeing the quality control, so it doesn't become unwatchable rubbish like the public access TV in America. But the idea is to try and get the community involved in program-

Oxford people are to be used as guests, presenters and technicians. Mr Thomas plans from opening up the spectrum a local news service using local is to make the people respon-

dozens of local volunteers who people as video-journalists and sible for some of their viewing." editors following their own stories. What's on, entertainment and community information will make up the majority of the output. But it will be delivered in the user-friendly form of chat shows, sports programmes and location reports. And using encourage local advertisers to

> manage its own international news service. "The idea is that the expansion in television services should not just be about big business," added Mr Thomas. "The obvious development that comes

The new channel has been freed by the Independent Television Commission from the advertising restrictions that apply to ITV and Channels 4 and 5, so it will be able to air long in-

fomercials which it believes will

a feed from Reuters it will even support it. We want the ads to be more part of the service than just hard selling," said Mr Thomas. "Cookery programmes done with local restaurants would

meet both our needs." Its business plan has been approved by both the ITC and who believe its £1.5m annual budget is easily achievable.

City television in the UK is not new, but has so far been restricted to cable channels and existing media owners like Mirror Group's Live TV and Associated Newspapers' Channel One. By comparison many of the staff of the Oxford Channel come from the alternative video news magazine Undercurrents. This has specialised in filming protests and events ignored by mainstream media.

Now under this licence they have two years to prove that the people can compete with the the accountancy firm KPMG moguls.

Sue Townsend and Austin Mitchell start novel on Net

By Kate Watson-Smyth

JOHN UPDIKE led the way with the first interactive novlast year and now the fishing port of Grimsby is set to follow in his footsteps.

The beginning of a novel will appear on the Net on Monday and will be written by relay over the next month. The opening paragraphs were written by the playwright Trevor Griffiths

being before passed on to several celebrity authors, including Sue Townsend and the town's MP, Austin Mitchell.

Future Perfect,

The Office Years, was launched by the Grimsby Evening Telegraph and will form part of nual literature fes- Townsend have tival. From Mon- written sections day anyone who feels inspired can submit 150 words and the best entry

will be added at midday each day until 14 March. Mr Griffiths, who wrote the screenplay for the film Reds, was given carte blanche

to begin the story however he wanted and the result is a science fiction tale set somewhere in the future. It begins: "From the bottom of the valley, you could see what the locals meant. God's Armchair, they called it. The 300ft limestone stand shimmered in the January heat. Just the place for a God to park his arse after a hard night's work."

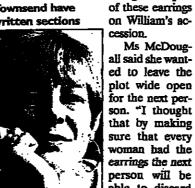
The body of a young woman which had been frozen to the bottom of a

river-bed is found after the thaw following the ice storms of '41 - the reader is not told which century. The only ciue el published on the Internet is that the body was wearing a pair of earrings depicting a photograph of twins.

Each author added the required 150 words to take the story on, apart from Austin Mitchell, who was so carried away by literary inspiration that he wrote 500 before reluctantly handing over to his wife, Linda Mc-

Dougall She revealed that the photographs on the earrings show the twin daughters of King William of Europe, Princesses Diana and Elizabeth. However, further inquiries found that every female European citizen

the North East Novel ideas: Trevor Lincolnshire an- Griffiths and Sue



Ms McDougall said she wanted to leave the plot wide open for the next person. "I thought that by making sure that every woman had the earrings the next person will be able to discard that if they don't like it or use it as a cive and

was given a pair

Mr Griffiths said he was so taken with the idea of writing an open-ended story on the Internet that he is considering setting up another one. "You do feel that the story is yours, but I am happy with the way the others have taken it."

develop that theme."

he said. Budding authors can find details of how to enter at www.grimsby-online.co.uk.

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Bond of the Bard broken as theatrical friends fall out

By David Lister Arts News Editor

ET TU BRUTE? The Royal Shakespeare Company has been publicly savaged - not by philistines or opponents of public subsidy but by the English Shakespeare Company.

The common bond between the two companies - of bringing the Bard to the masses - has been broken.

The RSC is guilty of "a raiding exercise", neglecting educational and community activity, says Michael Bogdanov, head of the ESC.

That is "a gross calumny," retorts Adrian Noble, artistic director of the RSC, adding for good measure that Mr Bogdanov's comments are "irresponsible" and "destructive".

The falling out is remarkable one. Until recently, Mr Noble would invite Mr Bogdanov to stage plays at the Royal Shakespeare Company, and championed his work there.

But now Mr Bogdanov has turned on his former colleagues with a vengeance.

The focus of the confrontation is Newcastle upon Tyne. The RSC plays a month-long residency in the city, and has done so for 21 years.

The ESC-a company which tours plays nationally - has moved to Newcastle and is using it as the base for educational activity and for launching its tours.

It is perhaps significant that both companies might now be chasing money from the same funding sources for their Newcastle opera-

in the North-east arts journal The Northern Review that the RSC's residency is "just a raiding exercise of the year which takes the city's

set up educational and community activities, and says it has "devastated" Newcastie's theatre output.



Mr Bogdanov claims in an article Creative tension: Alex Jennings in the title role of the latest RSC production of Hamlet performed during its recent residency in Newcastie upon Tyne Photograph: Clive Barda

"I'm not saying the RSC shouldn't on Newcastle, for five or six weeks come to Newcastle," he added. "But what is wrong is that the policy has danov has found it necessary to Newcastle season before transferring He accuses the RSC of failing to its initial impact. The RSC should have had a much more comprehen- region ... sive and ideological stance - which is what I hope we are now supplying."

"I feel saddened that Michael Bovert funding for his own plans in this

"The RSC's commitment to the North-east." North-east is indubitable. Each year,

Last night, Mr Noble responded: between 12 and 16 Stratford pro- into his attacker and erstwhile col- activities in the region, but it ductions have formed a month-long not opened out and developed after attack the RSC, presumably to sub- to the Barbican Theatre in London. Over this time, the RSC has formed a great bond with the people of the

And, plunging the dagger back

league, Mr Noble warned that the would be wholly wrong if these ESC's educational activity could af- activities were to eventually affect fect the work of the North-east's own the work of the region's indig-

Michael for wanting to develop further community and educational

enous theatre companies, like the He said: "I entirely support excellent Northern Stage, who must have prime responsibility for

Jails to extra £69m

By Jason Bennetto Crime Correspondent

THE SOARING prison population is continuing to drain money from the Government coffers as the Home Office was forced yesterday to announce an extra £69m to cope with over-

crowding. The additional money, which will help keep the prison ship affoat, follows earlier promises of a £43m cash injection in the past year. The extra cash up to April 1999 comes on top of the existing prison budget of £1,704m.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said yesterday that the extra £112m would provide 1,540 new jail places and the placing of an additional 2.280 prisoners in existing accommodation in England and Wales. It will cover the building of six new house blocks in jails around the country, the conversion of existing prison space into cells and the continued use of the prison ship HMP Weare, in Portland harbour, Dorset.

The total prison population in England and Wales currently stands at more than 64,300. The most recent Home Office estimates suggest that if current trends continue, that figure could rise to between 82,800 and 92,600 by 2005, requiring the building of up to 24 additional jails at a cost of £2bn.

The recent predictions are far higher than previous ones, raising concerns that the Home Office will have to continue to pour in huge amounts of extra money for the next decade.

Tougher sentences and an increased willingness by the courts to jail more people for longer periods is blamed for the continued rise in the number of people behind bars.

Jack Straw hopes that extending non-custodial sentences, such as home curfews for those convicted monitored by electronic tags, will help to stem the rise, which has meant 20,000 extra inmates in four

British cars are the dearest in Europe

By Katherine Butler Brussels

BRITISH motorists are getting a Volkswagen Polo which costs which carries out checks every ers. VW was hit with the biggest a raw deal from car makers despite the strength of sterling acshows the UK is still the most tugal: expensive place in Europe to buy a car.

And although Europe is supobstacles to shopping around for bargains on the continent. Dealers are either flouting their obligation to supply right-hand drive models or are simply refusing to sell to foreigners, the European Commission found. For 61 of the 72 best-selling

around 30 per cent more than six months. in most other EU countries and

raised them to cash in on windfall profits.

The cheapest cars according to he study are to be had in the Netherlands and Portugal, and the difference between prices in a lengthy investigation was sell them and warned it would

prices in the UK were highest. other end of the scale is widen- German citizens from buying The higgest difference was on ing, said the commission - cheaper cars from Italian deal-

cording to new survey which 54 per cent more than in Porthe study shows for luxury. medium and small cars alike. A such practices as well as price-The strength of sterling ought top of the range BMW 316 i for fixing are widespread in the into have driven car prices down example costs 22 per cent more dustry. the commission said, yet it in Britain than across the chanposed to be a single market found that most car-makers nel in Belgium or 30 per cent Britons still face overwhelming have not only failed to cut more than in Holland. The difprices in Britain in response to ferential also applies for small who want to buy abroad to save the rise in sterling but have cars: the gap in price between money but find it impossible to a Toyota Starlet in Belgium or order right-hand drive models Luxembourg and in Britain is over 40 per cent.

Brussels recently declared war on Volkswagen which after the EU to dealers who want to

fine ever imposed on a compa-British car prices are highest ny by the EU but the latest survey confirms suspicions that

> The commission said it was receiving "continual com plaints" from British consumers Yesterday, it warned manufacturers that right-hand drives must be available throughout

Consumers' Organisation said the main obstacle for British refuse to sell you a car". motorists hunting for cheaper cars on the continent. "Dealers ket rules, consumers have a "parallel trade". >

el, or that the delivery time will their own country. But admin-Volkswagen-style tactics were be excessive or they will just istrative and bureaucratic ob-

models covered by the study these countries and those at the found to be illegally preventing take legal enforcement action. will either tell you they cannot right to buy a car anywhere in Ursula Pachl of the European supply a right-hand drive mod- the bloc and import it into stacles are still hampering Under the EU's single mar- what the commission calls years.



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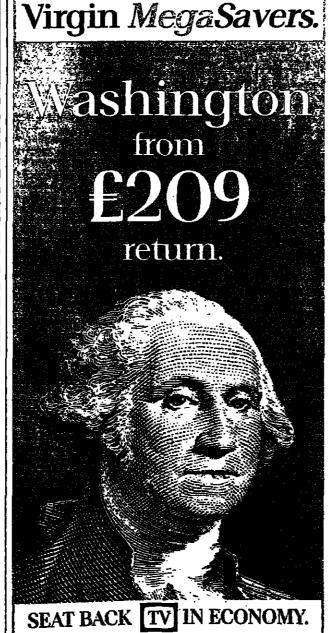
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Trial by grand jury looms for Lewinsky

By John Carlin in Washington

Monica Lewinsky returned to Washington from California to comfort her mother, the victim of a battering from Kenneth Start's grand-jury inquisitors, as controversy raged over whether White House Secret Service agents should be compelled to testify against the man they are sworn to protect.

In a climate of bewildering procedural confusion the one thing that now appears as certain as anything else is that Ms Lewinsky, the 24-year-old former White House intern alleged to have had sex with the President, will be facing the music herself before the grand jury next week.

Her mother, Marcia Lewis, was scheduled to have undergone a third successive day of sociation of Secret Service ofinterrogation on Thursday but ficers, said it was inappropriate



Kenneth Starr: Focus on Secret Service evidence

"the torture", as Ms Lewinsky's lawyer described it, was postponed pending developments on the matter of the Secret ser-

vice agents' testimony. Mike Leibig, a lawyer who represents a 500-member as-

First Family. "We've expressed that view in a letter." Mr Leibig said. "I don't know what Starr's office has decided to do."

behalf of Lewis Fox, a retired Secret Service agent quoted in as saying he had seen the President and Ms Lewinsky alone in ing. "That's not his recollection," Mike Leibig said of his client, Mr Fox. The officer "saw them together", but "he could not tell whether they were alone or not. He knows they were in the Oval Office, but he does not know whether there were other people in the room."

At least one other Secret Service agent who worked in the White House has received a

to compel any testimony that subpoena to appear before the makes it difficult to protect the grand jury by Mr Starr, the independent counsel investigating Mr Clinton.

Attorney-General Janet Reno, drawn in to arbitrate on the controversy, said the Justice Mr Leibig is also acting on Department was reviewing the question of whether the govthe Washington Post this week ernment should oppose subpoenas for members of the Secret Service. "We're trying to the White House at the end of review all of the issues; obvious 1995. Now that story is chang- among them is the security and the safety of the president of the United States," Mrs Reno said.

The word "safety" could be interpreted in two ways, since Mr Starr is apparently convinced eyewitness evidence from a Secret Service agent could contradict Mr Clinton's public denials, and Ms Lewinsky's denial under oath last month, that they engaged in an "improper" relationship.



Nigerian-led force tries to depose leaders of last year's coup against the elected government Photograph: Corinne Duffa

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Shake-up ends Germany's cosy university life

By Imre Karacs in Bonn

GERMANY'S middle-aged students are to be turfed out of their cosy alma mater, their professors submitted to independent scrutiny, and state funding of universities will be linked to performance. These and other proposals

were approved by the lower house of the Parliament yesterday, heralding a revolution in the German world of learning. While the argument over some aspects of the controversial Further Education Bill is set to reverberate in the upper chamber of the Bundesrat, the most important changes will come into effect in the next academic year.

It takes, on average, more than seven years for a German to get his or her university diploma. Under the new law, they should be able to attain their Masters in four and a half years. Institutes will also be allowed to introduce courses leading up to a shorter Bachelor's degree.

To hurry them along, universities will henceforth be compelled to test their students' progress in examinations, and even to expel those who repeatedly fail to make the grade. Endless re-takes will not be tolerated.

After years of debate and commissions of inquiry, the politicians have discovered the formula that will not only help focus the scholars' minds, but should also channel tax-payers' money more effectively.

The arithmetic that academics have failed to grasp is as tollows: university funding has remained static for the last 20 years, while the number of students has doubled. The students, subsidised to the hilt and paying no fees, were stay- per cent of the places available. ing on longer and longer, inlecture theatres. In a fast-movin their thirties, their knowledge already well out of date.

The next generation of graduates will now be younger, of the way, universities should compromise looms.

be able to devote more attention to students who are not there simply to enjoy the social life.

Standards are to be raised, too. Under the new law, curricula will be more tightly organised and regularly monitored by independent inspectors. Part of the state's contribution will be subject to the performance of staff in teaching as well as research.

The progress of women through the faculties will be another factor the authorities will take into account when doling out the money. An estimated 5 per cent of academic staff are women, confined mostly to the lower and middle rungs of the career ladder.

The students will be able to mark their lecturers' performance. Research will be evaluated by peer reviews, and both the ability to teach and academic achievement will count for promotions.

Universities will also be a lowed to select their students.

University funding has remained static for the last 20 years, while the number of students has doubled

The present system is a lottery. Applicants are sorted according to their grades but are then distributed among Germany's seats of learning. Some courses, such as medicine, can limit their intake, but most cannot. The new law will allow universities to make some selection themselves, but only for the limited intake courses, and only for 20

Tens of thousands of stucreasing congestion in the dents took to the streets at the end of last year, sworn to fight ing world, German undergrad- this Bill. They may be back next uates often hit the job market month, when the Bill goes to the upper chamber for approval. The Social Democrats and the Greens are fighting a provision which would allow universities leaner and, hopefully, better to fine students who want to requalified. With the laggards out take a year. Another messy

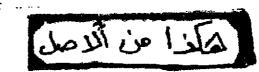
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Australia set for a battle royal

A vote next year will decide whether to ditch the Queen and become a republic, Robert Milliken writes in Sydney

ALMOST a century after their people, sifted by a committee crashing down. Younger dele-Australians vote next year to decide whether to remove the British monarchy from it and become a republic.

The decision to call a referendum to decide whether to end the last constitutional link with Britain came at the end of a constitutional convention in Canberra yesterday, where 152 delegates decided overwhelmingly that the question should go to a public vote. It voted 133-17 to set up a referendum, after agreeing earlier by 89-52 to support in principle that Australia become a republic.

Republican delegates at the two-week convention clapped and hugged when the results were announced. John Howard, the Prime Minister, and a monarchist, told the convention it had spoken "very clearly".

If Australia voted yes to become a republic, it should make the change on 1 January 2001, the centenary of the country's federation.

There are two big hurdles still in the way of the change. The first is that the constitution is hard to change. Amending referendums must win a majority nationally and also a majority in four of the six states.

The second problem is that, despite the convention's support for a republic in principle, the question of what form of republic Australia should become is destined to divide the referendum campaign. Four different models, from four different and entirely male. Half the delblocs, fought for support at the Canberra convention.

The model that won did so by four votes. It proposes that the head of state who replaces the Queen be approved by a two-thirds majority of federal parliament, after candidates Australia's constitution would

and boiled down to one by the prime minister and leader of the opposition.

The aim is to to avoid any disruption to Australia's Westminster system by preserving the head of state's largely ceremonial functions. Dissident republicans, who wanted the head of state elected directly by the people, have branded this model a "mule republic".

Mr Howard privately believes the referendum will fail. His conservative coalition will campaign neither for nor against. He said members of the Liberal Party, which he leads, will have a free vote. He had little choice; six Liberal ministers have come out as republicans and more are expected to follow. Kim Beazley, the Labor Party opposition leader, said his party would campaign for the referendum.

worry will not be if the refer-

endum decides to end her fam-

ily's reign over Australia since

1788, but if it produces an in-

conclusive result, leaving her to

stay on as a head of state who

is not really wanted.

It could also be that Australians will swing behind the referendum as the country prepares for celebrations to mark the 2001 centenary. The Canberra convention captured the country's imagination. Thousands queued at the original Parliament House to watch republicans and monarchists debate the pros and cons of removing the monarchy from a constitution drawn up in Queen

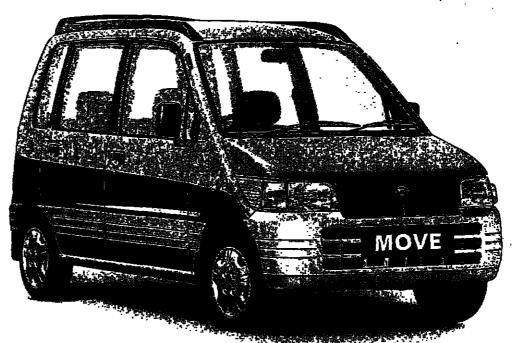
Victoria's day. The convention came 100 years after three conventions that drew up the constitution. These were largely non-elected egates to the 1998 convention were elected in a postal ballot, half appointed by the government. Almost half were women, and five were Aborigines.

The monarchists maintained that tacking a republic on to have been nominated by the bring the Westminster system

gates said it was all about ditching the last vestiges of Australia's colonial past and recognising the reality of its multicultural society. Jason Yat-Sen Li, 25, a lawyer and son of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, said: "I have a vision in which an ethnic Australian may be elected head of state." The Queen was barely mentioned at the convention. It would seem that her biggest

Janet Holmes à Court, the businesswoman and republican supporter, with the convention chairman, Ian Sinclair at the close yesterday Photograph: AP

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Cook inspects devastation of **Montserrat**

By Phil Davison in St John's, Antigua

ROBIN COOK will become the first Foreign Secretary to set on the neighbouring island of foot on a "British dependent territory" in the Caribbean today when he visits the volcanostricken Montserrat. Mr Cook last year, before a pyroclastic flow said in Antigua yesterday that he wants to see for himself the effects of two years of devastation on the island and to reassure the 3,000 remaining islanders that Britain is not try-

ing to force them out. Most islanders said vesterday that they would receive Mr Cook politely but were still highly suspicious of Britain's longerterm motives. They noted that the British government was conditioning its promise of supporting the islanders on reports by British scientists of the activity of the Soufriere Hills volcano.

"At any moment, they could tell us 'the volcano's getting dangerous, we've got to get you all out'," said George, a Montserrat taxi driver, "What kind of security does that offer us?" The remaining islanders, just over one-quarter of the 11,000 inhabitants before the first eruption of 1995, are squeezed into a small northern area, with twothirds of the island, including the capital, Plymouth, abandoned.

"I certainly hope Mrs Short's not coming with him," several islanders said yesterday, referring to Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International

Development. Ms Short disgusted the islanders, most of whom had lost their homes and possessions and were living with relatives or in shelters, late last year when she criticised their calls for British aid. "They'll be asking for golden elephants next," she said at residents see narcotics and bathe time, when all most wanted was a single-room house and the reopening of schools.

Despite anti-British protests last year, islanders said Mr Cook would be well treated,

particularly for visiting them during the latest Gulf crisis.

After listening to the problems of Montserratian refugees Antigua this morning, he is to fly to Montserrat by helicopter. The island's airstrip was closed thundered down on it, destroying the terminal building and covering the airport with ash.

During a helicopter tour of the devastated areas, including Plymouth, Mr Cook hopes to touch down briefly at the airstrip to see the damage, unless he is warned that the volcano could erupt again. Scientists say the volcano's dome has been rebuilding again at the rate of eight cubic metres per second since its most recent major eruption last December. As a result, the British governor, Tony Abbott, and local government have stopped special trips into the evacuated zone by insurance assessors and residents with passes to retrieve possessions.

Before flying to Antigua yesterday, Mr Cook chaired the second day of a "Caribbean Forum" in Nassau, the Bahamas, during which he was expected to pledged a higher priority to Britain's "dependent territories," now to be called "overseas territories". At the forum, Britain was to donate a brand new, £500,000 40ft fast boat for training the coastguards of Caribbean nations in anti-narcotics sweeps.

Also at the forum, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, along with several private banks, were to announce new "micro-credits" to help small businesses start up as alternatives to the traditional industries, notably bananas. Many Caribbean nanas as increasingly interlinked. United States measures which affect Caribbean banana production are opening the door to drug production or trafficking,

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Hardware of war chills the desert breeze

By Raymond Whitaker in Kuwait

THE CONCRETE bunkers of the Ali al-Salem air base in building bricks on a carpet. It takes a moment or two to realise walls, each has been cracked open, their heavy doors twisted

33 miles away, seems a lot less and metal from that war.

Knwait loom up from the flat Tornado fighter-bombers, their desert landscape like plastic crews, equipment and support personnel were still in Europe. But as the diplomatic options that, despite their 20ft thick narrow and the military buildbombs exactly like the ones attacked seven years ago to alternatives in Saudi Arabia, a being mounted on the wings of deny them to Saddam Hus- safer distance from Iraq, had

The coalition against Iraq is much smaller this time, and the ident Saddam a propaganda goal of using armed force - undad's weapons facilities achieve. In all probability the Ali al-Salem base, last used by the

The danger of handing Prescoup if large numbers of Iraqi conditional inspection of Bagh- civilians are killed in air attacks was not far from the minds of immeasurably harder to Air Commodore Peter Harris, the most senior RAF officer in the Gulf region, or of the visit-RAF finds itself using military RAF in 1961, would not have ing Lord Gilbert, the defence succession of British and Ameror blown off, by laser-guided facilities which the allies been pressed into service if procurement minister. In using terms such as "minimum col-. lateral damage" and "preci-

tics would be selected to keep civilian casualties hopefully to zero. We have the skill to pin-

point our attacks." Behind him, sleek 1,000lb bombs were being loaded in a chill desert breeze.

Lord Gilbert, the latest of a ican officials to swing through the Gulf rallying support, said the weaponry that might be used this time was "even more ac-

military conflict with Iraq, only 33 miles away, seems a lot less and metal from that many and metal from the metal metal from the metal metal from the metal from the metal fro Saddam, he replied that it was "growing all the time, almost by the hour". British lives would be at risk, he added, "which is exactly why we would prefer a diplomatic solution".

The operational aircrews were kept away from the press, but the visit was a diversion of sorts for the ground crews, deprived of alcohol and anxious for news of the ructions at Chelsea football club. "It's just

like bloody Norfolk - flat and

Any questions about the dangers they faced were greeted with similar jocularity, but last time the Tornadoes suffered said. proportionately higher losses than any other type of aircraft, having been used in low-level attacks on airfields. Their role, though almost certainly not their tactics, would be similar this time, deploying 1,000lb and 2,000lb Paveway III laserguided bombs.

An older officer looking on was more reflective than his juniors. "When I first went into the RAF, none of the people of my present age had any medals, and they were proud of it," he

"That's how effective we were in keeping the peace. Now I have three campaign medals and a decoration, plus some foreign ones I'm not allowed to wear, and it's the same for the rest of my generation. The world has got more dangerous."

Labour MP warns of 'genocidal' strike

Political Correspondent

BOMBING Saddam Hussein's biological and chemical weapons sites would have a "genocidal" effect on the Iraqi people and on neighbouring countries. a Labour MP said yesterday.

Tam Dalyell, member for Linlithgow and one of a group of MPs opposing the threatened military strike, said in a Commons debate that "by a sort of dreadful collusion with Saddam that the US and British governments will be directly

contributing to genocide." He quoted from a letter to the Secretary of State for Defence, George Robertson, and to Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. from an Open University professor, Stephen Rose, which warned that the danger to people in neighbouring states would be "incalculable". The letter said: "If the bombing is effective we are faced with the inevitable, uncontrolled release of large quantities of lethal agents, including presumably nerve and and radioactive materials.

"These agents will drift over significant areas of Iraq resulting in further illness and death ished citizens and will not stop at Iraq's borders."

Mr Cook's Livingston con-debates in both Houses of Parstituents, whom he used to rep- liament.

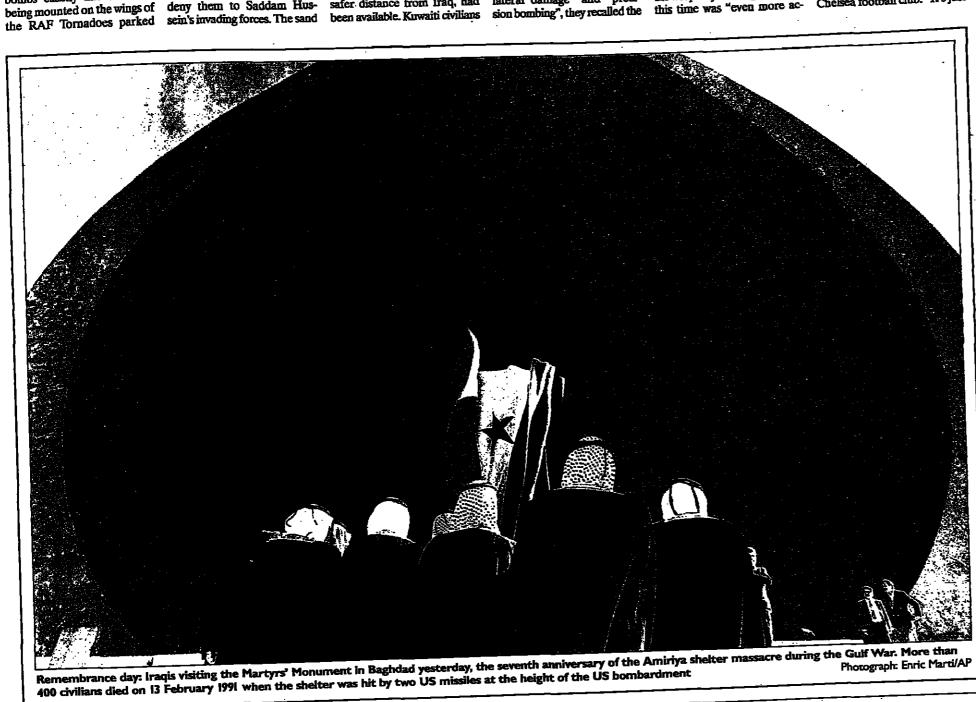
resent, were not impressed by his stance. "I don't think they want their present MP, the Foreign Secretary, prancing around the Middle East trying to drum up support for allowing the British use of bases from which in these circumstances to launch weapons of awesome destruction." he said.

Replying, the Foreign Office minister Derek Fatchett said that only the threat of military action could bring hope of Iraq complying with UN Security Council resolutions.

"Without that [military] option there would be no chance of the diplomatic process being successful. And that is what we have been seeking ... and will continue to seek," he said. "If we play the game in a way that appears to be appeasement to dictatorship, the consequences that will follow, we should know from the history of this century. are considerably more hornific than standing up to dictatorship."

After Mr Dalyell said that Tony Blair should avoid making the mistakes of his predecessor mustard gas as well as anthrax Anthony Eden, who was forced to resign after Britain invaded Egypt during the Suez Crisis in 1956, Mr Fatchett accused him of an "unworthy" personal atamongst its already impover- tack on both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary.

The exchanges came ahead Mr Dalyell also claimed that of next Tuesday's full-day



Russia's links with Baghdad embarrass diplomatic drive

THE ADVERT might have read something like this: neglected former empire, with serious health and money worries, seeks new friends to share companionship, business dealings, and a penchant for showing Americans that they are not the only heavyweights on the planet. Pariahs welcome.

The lonely heart, of course, is Russia whose relationship with Baghdad is now proving so frustrating to policy makers in Washington as they put the final touches to their plans to bomb Iraq.

True, Iraq cannot exactly be described as a new friend - ties go well back into Soviet times - but its relationship with Moscow has been recast in the last few years during Russia's slow drift away from an exclusively pro-Western liberal foreign policy.

That much is clear every time Boris Yeltsin lurches onto the world stage with his theatrical predictions that a strike against Iraq could lead to a third world war. But now a far more sinister dimension to the relationship is being presented to the world.

Russia stands accused of using its foreign intelligence agents covertly to help Saddam Hussein in his efforts to thwart United Nations inspectors. It is alleged that Moscow may even have sold - or, at least, planned to sell - equipment to pursue his murderous goals, by striking a deal with Baghdad to supply an animal feed fermentation tank that could also have been used to make biological weapons.

The claims arose in Thursday's Washington Post, and seem to have come from a source in the CIA. Yesterday the Times repeated part of them, adding an account of a meeting by members of the UN Special Commission (Unscom), who in 1996 gathered at a hotel in Basingstoke, Hampshire to prepare for a trip to Iraq.

The Times said an official was seen grew used to covet as its own. Whilst it ing in its favours.

Phil Reeves in Moscow examines claims that Russia helped Saddam over arms inspections

pumping information out of Russian commission members every night. He turned out to be the London-based "resident" from the Russian foreign intelligence service, SVR. When the team eventually arrived at a suspect site in Iraq, they found their way blocked by Iraqi troops, who had apparently been tipped off.

Both stories have been angrily dismissed by Moscow officials. The Times' account was waved aside by the Federal Security Service. "Any sensible person can see it lacks common sense and logic," said spokesman Yuri Kobaladze. "What would be the point of our 'resident' officer going

to Hampshire to meet our representatives?" Discerning the truth in a conflict in which both sides are experts in the art of black propaganda will be difficult. But it is easy to see why the West is suspicious of Moscow. For most of the decade Russia's foreign policy has been steadily pro-Western. Hungry for loans, debt relief, foreign investment, renewed global clout and a means to force the repayment of Soviet era debts, Moscow has pressed consistently for integration into international, Western-run

Now it has shifted to more ambivalent ground. It has watched unhappily as Nato prepares to march to its borders. It has seen the United States grab a hefty stake in the Caspian, whose vast oil reserves Moscow

knows it will long be financially dependent on the West - and cannot truly welcome the prospect of a heavily armed Saddam -

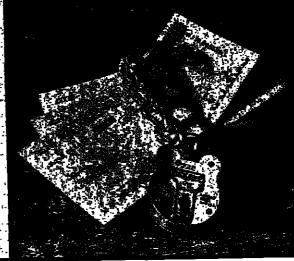
it is casting about for a new role. Central to this process is the figure of Yevgeny Primakov, a fluent Arab speaker whose friendship with Saddam Hussein stretches back three decades. The Western media rarely mentions the Foreign Minister's name without reminding their customers that he is the former head of foreign

Yet he is subtler figure than a knee-jerk Cold Warrior. He is a pragmatic geopolitical strategist who is looking for a counterweight to American power and a means of restoring the status of Russian diplomacy. Critics he has aplenty. He is making a "grave mistake", wrote Michael McFaul, an analyst at the Moscow Carnegie Centre. "The economic advantages of open trade with Iraq are only a fraction of the potential eco-

nomic benefits of Western integration." Mr Primakov is, however, far from master of his destiny. A handful of mighty energy and banking interests stand guard constantly at his shoulder, trying to fuse foreign policy with their interests. Last year Russia struck a multi-billion dollar deal to develop the Qurna oil field in southern Iraq. agreeing not to go ahead until UN sanctions are lifted. Lukoil, the leader of the consortium involved in the contract, is

widely considered one of the handful. Before Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the Soviet Union had thousands of specialists in Baghdad. It had played a part in the development of 15 Iraqi oil fields. The army used Soviet aircraft and Soviet tanks, having spent some \$7bn (£4.3bn) on arms - a bill that is still unpaid. When the Iraq conflict is is settled, expect to see Moscow cash-

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Iran unyielding on Rushdie death-threat decree, on 14 February, 1989, to kill him first," Mr Moqtadaie

By Andrew Marshall and agencies

ON THE ninth anniversary of the fatwa against Salman Office said. Britain holds the Rushdie, Britain yesterday called for Iran to find a "satisfactory solution" to the impasse over the death sentence it has passed on the writer.

"The European Union welcomes the new Iranian government's stated commitment to

respect the rule of law and their emphasis on the need for a dialogue of civilisations," a statement from the Foreign presidency of the EU. But signs from Iran were not encouraging. A judicial official said the Indian-born British writer must be killed. "The shedding of this man's blood is obligatory." chief prosecutor. In a fatwa, or those closest to that person try must be preserved."

Changing of the Great Sented around 1901. Destins: Dame Chineses 7573. New Common synagogue (Common Destination)

Ayatollah Khomeini said said in a sermon at Tehran Uni-Muhammad in his book The Satanic Verses. Since then he has die." Mr Moqtadaie, a cleric, lived largely in hiding and un- said that during his lifetime der protection of the British government. "Any Muslim who must kill the person who commits the insult. It is better that did, and this [death sentence]

Rushdie should be killed for alversity. Worshippers shouted legedly insulting the Prophet Allahu Alchar [God is great] Muhammad in his book The Sa- when he said "Rushdie must Muhammad sent two people to cut the throat of a man who had hears an insult to the Prophet insulted him. "What Khomeini did is exactly what the Prophet

لكذا من ألاصل

* The black heart of Indian politics

By Peter Popham in New Delhi

TWO DAYS before polling begins in the world's biggest election, there is little doubt about the most important issue - and it is nothing to do with policies. It is the infestation of Indian politics by criminals.

It is not a party issue, because no party, except arguably the Communists, is untainted. To speak of sleaze would be to indulge in quaint understatement. India's problems are not free nights at the Ritz or cash for questions, nor are they limited to kickbacks from government contracts. India's nightmare is the likely election to parliament of dozens of mainstream candidates who are hardened, violent criminais, often gang leaders, several of them with multiple murders to their name.

On Thursday a panel consisting of a retired Supreme Court judge and three other upstanding citizens, sponsored by the weekly magazine Outlook, presented the findings of their research into the criminalisation of Indian politics. More than 4,000 candidates are contesting this election. The panel had the resources to examine 500 of those in the mainstream parties. Of those, more than 70, in the panel's judgement, deserve to be barred from standing.

"To have true democracy in this country," said Justice Kuldip Singh, a former Supreme Court judge, "... there must be stringent laws barring those who have criminal records from participating in the elections."

It may come as a surprise that India has no such law. At present any citizen can stand for election in India unless they have had a criminal conviction upheld by the Supreme Court. In theory this ought to be enough to keep the criminals out but so long-drawn-out is the judicial process, and so susceptible to political pressure, that many confirmed, indeed outrageous crim-

Phoolan Devi, the "bandit queen" from the ravines of Madhya Pradesh, is only the most infamous example. After shooting to death 22 upper-caste villagers in revenge for being raped and abused years earlier, the female gang leader was held in prison for 11 years without being brought to trial. When members of her own caste came to power in the state she was released, and is now running for a second term as the Samajwadi Par-

ty's candidate for Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh. It is the "Hindi belt" of impoverished North Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, which provide the most flagrant examples of the criminalisation of politics.

inals, are strolling the corridors of power. Flat plan: Party workers carrying cut-outs of Bal Thackeray, the prominent Hindu, to various election campaign sites in Bombay yesterday

Union: with a population of 140 million, against him, and Prem Prakash Singh, the if it were a sovereign country it would be the eighth biggest in the world, bigger than Japan. Last October the state was the scene of a power struggle between two chief ministers. The victorious minister, Kalyan Singh, clinched his triumph by luring dozens of representatives to his side of the chamber with promises of ministerial posts. The result was the biggest cabinet in Indian history, 93 members, of which at least 17 had criminal backgrounds. The new ministers included Hari Shankar Tiwari, a gang and may well win the coming election. Uttar Pradesh is the biggest state in the leader with nine murder cases pending

"Terror of Terai", accused of two cases of murder and three of attempted murder.

What made Kalyan Singh's coup all the more perturbing was that he is a prominent member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Hindu Nationalist Party which has long asserted that it is the only party of principle left in the country. By this cynical manoeuvre Kalyan Singh indicated that the BJP is just opportunistic as its rivals. The BJP was briefly in power at the centre last year,

The political rise of the "Goondas" or

Mafiosi reflects the fact that much of the Indian hinterland is still in the grip of feudalistic overlords who control their communities through menace and terror. The rapid succession of expensive elections, and the absence of real policy issues, has brought a frightening symbiosis into being: between the political parties on the one hand, strapped for cash and eager for winnable candidates; and cash-happy Goondas, glad of a way to launder their funds and legitimise their power.

"Most political parties are prepared to embrace them for the power they can ex-

ercise over their caste or community with their ferocious image, "wrote Alok Shar-

ma recently in The Pioneer. The ultimate blame for this state of affairs is laid at the door of Indira Gandhi, who, while prime minister in the Seventies, removed the ceiling on election expenditure, thus practically inviting gangsters to parley their black money into political power through the election process. The consequence is seen in the benighted condition of huge tracts of Northern India, which look exactly as desperate and lawless as you would expect of places ruled by outlaws.

Germans seize Kurdish suspect

German prosecutors said they had detained a 33-year-old Kurd suspected of being a regional leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and carrying out arson attacks on behalf of the banned group. The Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe said the Turkish citizen, identified only as Aygul B, had been detained in Dortmund earlier this week. The woman took over a leading position in the PKK for a region of western Germany including Essen, Duisburg and Dortmund.

SA Aids toll

The Health Minister, Nkosazana Zuma, said 1,500 South Africans were infected every day with the virus that causes Aids. A spokesman said around 2 million South Africans were unaware they were infected with HIV. The United Nations programme UNAIDS estimates 2.4 million of South Africa's population of just under 40 million are already infected with HIV, more than the total number infected in the whole of the Americas.

- Reuters, Cape Town

Frozen out

Alexander Lebed, who once said he wanted only one job, Russia's presidency, has decided to run for governor of a Siberian province as a steppingstone to the Kremlin. "I've ... put my faith in the hands of the people of Krasnoyarsk. If they decide their governor is worthy of running for president, then I will go. If not, then it's useless."

- AP, Moscow

Driving force

Germany's Foreign Ministry has sent Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze a new armour-plated limousine to replace the one damaged in Monday's unsuccessful assassination attempt. A spokesman said Germany was indebted to him for his role in events leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall and Germany's unification. The former Soviet foreign minister was in a motorcade in Tbilisi when assailants with grenade launchers opened fire. He - Reuters, Bonn

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Surprisingly ordinary prices



Prize winners: 'Independent' photographers shine at World Press Photo contest and take Nikon's Fashion Photographer of the Year title



Haunting anguish of Algerian mother

"Woman Grieves after Massacre in Bentalha" By Hocine

HOCINE never found out the name of his "madonna in hell". He returned to the village of Bentalha after the massacre of 23 September but she had disappeared, her anguish on Hocine's unforgettable photographs forever that of every grieving Algerian, the Unknown Sufferer in Algeria's war of unknown killers. The bodies had been deared from the streets when Hocine reached Bentalha and he almost lost the photograph that would soon challenge Robert Capa's dying Spanish civil war soldier and AP's napalm-burned Vietnamese gird, and that has now been judged the World Press Photo of 1997 in the biggest international competition for professional press photographers.

Hocine - who for security reasons never uses his family name - went to the local hospital where relatives were waiting for the names of the 300 slaughtered villagers. "I asked a policeman if I could take pictures and he said 'No'," he was to recall later. "Then I saw this woman leaning against a guard post weeping. I took several shots and changed my film before the cops made me hand it over." He gave the police only a blank roll; the image of the grief of the mother of eight murdered children was saved to haunt the world.

Hocine is 44 and the oldest of Algeria's surviving 20 war photographers (at least six have been murdered) and he knows the risks. People are much more frightened of a camera than of a Kalashnikov [rifle]," he says. "... if you walk around the streets with a camera, someone will put a bullet in your head." Last September, he transmitted just two frames of the woman to Paris. "I felt like I hadn't got any good pictures. I only realised the next day, when Paris told me."

Adventure in fashion takes prize

Sheridan Morley Fashion Photographer of the Year

THE freelance photographer Sheridan Morley named 1997 Fashion Photographer of the Year at the Nikon Press Awards on Thursday night. The prize of £1,500 was presented to Ms Morley for her diverse portfolio of fashion photography, including three images commissioned for The Independent Saturday Magazine and the Independent on Sunday Review. She arrived at Bafta for the ceremony just in time after a day shooting a fashion story for next week's Independent.

A news and fashion photographer for Today newspaper until 1995, Ms Morley has covered the catwalk shows for The Independent but has recently concentrated on her own style of fashion photography. The judges described her work as "very controlled ... very beautiful and adventurous".

Fashion was introduced as a separate category for the first time this year with entrants invited to submit a portfolio of five



pictures. Also highly commended in this section was the freelance photographer Peter Swanborough, Dave Viggers, Macdiarmid, who has also covered the international fashion shows for The Independent.

The judges included The Independent's picture editor David picture editor of Reuters news agency, and Isabella Kullman, picture editor of Vogue.

Africa's children take the floor

"Ballroom Dance in To By Jodie Bleber

THIS PICTURE OF MIS I man's dance academy in Ennerdale, south of Johannesburg, won the Arts Single Image award.

In the accompanying story, published in the Independent on Sunday in November last year, Mary Braid wrote describing how ballroom dancing had caught the imagination of black children from the South African townships.

The academy is in a "coloured" area, but also recruits children from the neighbouring black squatter camp.

Jodie Biebet has freelanced for a variety of international and South African newspapers and magazines for the past six years. Before taking up photography professionally. she was a media planner for an advertising agency.

Yesterday she said that she loved the sense of pride that



came through in the ballroom dancing picture.

"Africa is always portrayed in such a negative way, it's always poverty and starving children. That is part of the continent's story but not it all," she said.

"In this picture the chil-

the image is all about, it's about hope and the positive."

The children's teacher, Paul Kgola, begins dance practice by telling his young coloured and black pupils that they can achieve anything if they put

through. For me, that's what to think of themselves as winners, and their successes in competitions are proof that his particular approach

Apartheid once prevented against whites. Although the

dren's sense of pride shines their minds to it. He tells them racially segregated dancing associations only amalgamated two years ago, the children at Ennerdale are already picking up the top prizes.

Alist

 a_i

Jody Bieber also won second prize in the arts picture stoblack dancers from competing ry category in the international

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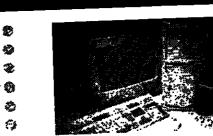
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Sam and Rob may not be a traditional couple, but their commitment to each other is just as strong, says Emma Cook

MARRIAGE FOR THE MILLENNIUM



SAM AND ROB are typical expectant parents-to-be. Sipping red wine in a Soho pub, they both talk excitedly of the months ahead; of how they're looking forward to the next scan; the reality of sleepless nights with a crying baby and changing nappies, the resigned acceptance that life will never be quite the same again come July. Sam's eyes light up with oride when he talks about his first response to the pregnancy. "When I found out it was just extraordinary. It was complete elation."

Except that they're not typical. Rob. an architect, and Sam, a book editor, are a gay couple who met mother-to-be Kate through an advertisement in the gay press earlier last year. Kate, also gay, has a four-yearold son, Ben, with another gay donor who sees the child regularly and plans to help out when Kate's second child is born. They all live near each other in north London.

On paper, the scenario seems extremely complicated.

as they map out their various emotional desires to have a plans and childcare arrangements, you realise it's a great deal more straightforward, emotionally at least, than so many messy domestic set-ups. But unlike the aftermath of divorce, their situation is borne out of a desire to have a child, not based around a failed relationship. So there are no hostile feelings or power games to be resolved, just a firm commitment to making things work for the sake of the child.

Sam says: "You have to be so careful about everything you say and do - you have to keep on good terms and resolve problems really quickly." And as Rob adds: "It's essential to create some sort of stability and routine."

Sam and Rob, who've been living together for about three years, began to explore the possibility of starting a family two years ago. Rob, 35. says: "We were in a situation where things were much more stable for us. We were an established couple and wanting children was really the next step." Initially Sam wanted to get married, although he laughs at the idea now, and they have both considered some sort of commitment ceremony, although Rob squirms slightly, knowing how cheesy that sounds. "I've seen it done so badly before it's a taste issue really."

Sam, now 36, has wanted to be a father since his early thirties. "Before that it was a case of, yes, I'm gay so I suppose I won't ever be able to be a parit could be possible because of negotiating nightmare". Yet, tion. So it opened up a lot of nic.

They rapidly discovered, though, that as a gay male couple, most avenues for parenting were firmly closed to them. In this sense, lesbian couples have a lot more choice if they wish to start a family. According to Stonewall spokeswoman Anya Palmer, only very few gay male couples have opted for co-parenting - partly because it's so difficult to organise. "It's something that lesbian couples find it far easier to do. They can use an individual donor or opt for co-parenting."

According to Stonewall's re-

search, one in six gay women has children, compared with one in 10 gay men, but the figures include children from previous heterosexual relationships. For male gay couples who wish to start a family from scratch, the numbers are negligible, partly because gay couples can't adopt - it's still illegal under the 1976 Adoption Act - although single people can. "It's a travesty," says Palmer. "And from the child's point of view it isn't ideal." So Rob and Sam realised that

if they wanted to be parents at all, they would have to compromise. Rob says: "Originally we'd have preferred to have done this as a couple. But there's absolutely no other way of doing it." After a series of long discussions with Kate they agreed on a 60/40 split of financial and parental responsibility, looking after the child for six days spread over a formight. Sam is going to start freelance working so he can ent'. Then I began to realise that enjoy more flexibility. All the coparents plan to spend birthdays what was happening in the and Christmases together, as well or as Sam admits, "a potential States - surrogacy and adop- as the odd Sunday lunch and pic-

In those first few meetings, they hashed through every aspect of the venture; gauging each other's thoughts on schooling, health and politics. It comes across as a curiously business-

One of the bigger hurdles was choosing who should be the biological father. Originally it like experience, until you realise was going to be Sam but after that it can't really be apsome tests it transpired that Rob proached in any other way. had the higher sperm count. "It "It's quite odd", says Sam. "It's was DIY" explains Rob. "Kate not like any other relationship used one of those plastic sythat would begin and then de- ringes at home. It wo velop. You're immediately start- a dream," he beams.

15/FEATURES

might make a baby of this'.

You're trying to leap ahead

across so many hurdles."

with it. I went through a really my need to biologically reproalised. My dad is dead and a lot to all of us." of that was tied into it." Now, that Rob is the biological father. a little confusing at first. "I'm

"It's quite nice because I love part of him makes me love the tranged parents too."

المكذا من الاصل

whole period gruelling. "At first child even now - in a way that I did feel differently that it was I wouldn't feel initially if I was his sperm. I had real problems an adoptive parent." When the time comes, says Sam, they will depressing time partly because tell the child who the biological father is. But we'll also say duce was far stronger than I re- that the reason he's here is down

Rob so much. Knowing that it's adoptive parents feel and es-

United we stand: But according to Stonewall, only one in 10 gay men has a child Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Not that this should make any difference to the child's upbringing at all, according to psychologist Charlie Lewis, who has researched fatherhood over the last 18 years. "There's no evidence that there I be any ambiguity about roles if the parents are gay. The point is that all parents reinvent patterns. That's what's creative about parenting, especially now that we're so detached from our extended fam-

This could be even truer for gay couples, who can't rely on their own parents' support moral or otherwise. As Sam says, "The parent has to get their head around having a gay child but then when it becomes gay-child-having-baby, it's more difficult to handle." Sam's mother, who lives in the United States, has been extremely supportive, while Rob is bracing himself to break the news to both his parents.

" It is scary because I sense disapproval", he laughs warily. "You always want to be approved of by your parents and once you show them something alternative you want them to react positively to it."

In terms of their own peer group, Sam says his straight friends are, surprisingly more tolerant about the whole venture than his gay friends. "So far we've had more resistance from our gay friends - some gay men wonder why we're buying into the established culture. the norm," Rob adds. "Most of our straight friends have kids Still, Sam is aware that his and think it's a brilliant idea, esthough, he seems quite happy role will be pretty unique, if not pecially in our situation, because we'll have time off every few They're mite et they think we've got the best of



It's the coolest thing on the piste at any rate. Alister Morgan reports on an Olympic phenomenon

FIRST it was someone getting caught using marijuana. Next came the news that another participant had wrecked his hotel room. Twenty years ago, you'd have assumed this was the behaviour of the members of a rock band. Today these are the antics of sportsmen. But not just any sportsmen - the exponents of the hippest winter game around - snow-

ety last week when the Canadian snowboarder, Ross Rebagliati, was stripped of his gold medal at the Winter Olympics in Nagano, after testing positive for marijuana. A successful appeal meant he was allowed to keep his medal, but not before rival Austrian boarder, Martin "The Terminator" Freinademetz was expelled from the Olympic village. His Olympic accreditation was withdrawn after a party at his hotel, when equipment was damaged and there were reports that a snowmobile had gone missing.

"We had a party, we had fun. something got broken, it's not cool, but it happened ..." Freinademetz told reporters on Thursday.

These antics did nothing to deter the crowds at Nagano,

The sport achieved notori- with more than 10,000 watching the sport's inaugural apреагапсе.

Snowboarding is far more than a spectator sport, however. Estimates suggest snowboarders will outnumber skiers within the next 10 years. It's an extraordinary achievement for a sport which did not exist 30 years ago and in the Eighties was still banned from many ski resorts. Today, with an estimated 5 million converts around the globe (60,000 from the UK), it is increasingly challenging the traditional Alpine supremacy of skiing.

So what had made this sport the coolest activity on snow, and the hottest thing at the Winter Olympics? Sure, its followers love its adrenaline-inducing qualities, but the whole lifestyle that goes with it, from the camaraderie of the snowboarders



to the clothes, are what have attracted young people to the

At first glance, snowboarding and skiing do not appear too dissimilar, but crucially, snowboarding derives from surfing and skateboarding - not skiing. Like surfers, snowboarders are usually younger, (23 on average) and live a tribal existence, travelling from country to country in search of the best snow.

Snowboarding is broken

Giant Slalom; Boardercross (similar to a motor-cross track with snow); Big Air & Style (competitors launch themselves off a snow ramps and perform acrobatics in mid-air); and the Halfpipe (inspired by skateboarding, in which the competitor gathers speed and rides

bank to bank performing tricks). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) endorsed two disciplines, but many boarders reject the notion of a sport altogether. To them snowboarding is a "lifestyle".

21-year-old Melanie Lean-Halfpipe champion and is also a convert from skiing. "I enjoy skiine, but snowboarding is so much more unrestricted." she says. "You don't have any poles, just a great feeling of commu-

down into four categories: Duel I just love being in the mountains. It's just you and the mountain; there's nothing else quite like it."

> Rebagliati's positive test for marijuana will not have surprised anyone connected with snowboarding. Olympic snowboarders are no more likely to take drugs than any other athlete, but the sport is inherently social. When participants habitually meet at the end of the day they are just as likely to drink, and experiment with drugs, as any other group of young people.

The advent of snowboarding do is the current Women's has essentially brought a clash of cultures between two generations (Freinademetz used to compete in a gorilla suit. He gave that up but still retains his bleached blonde hair, goatee and eyebrows). As recently as nity among snowboarders, and five years ago many ski resorts

banned boarders from their slopes, but snowboarding's ability to attract big money has al-

tered perceptions. Sponsors are falling over themselves to be associated with a growing sport whose protagonists are young, vibrant and highly marketable. While the minimum equipment (exclusive of clothing) required for snowboarding includes a snowboard, boots and bindings which can costs between £500 and £1,500, countless urban youths, who will never see the top of a mountain are spending hundreds of pounds of snowboarding jackets, trainers, sun-

glasses and other bit and pieces. So while TV viewers around the world marvel at the creativity of the Olympic sport, and debate the ethical implications of Rebagliati's case, businessmen are merely rubbing their hands.

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Fabulous Butcher Boy

Like the central character in his latest film, Neil Jordan would rather not grow up. Nick Hasted asked him why

IT WAS the voice Neil Jordan recognised first. Insistently innocent, ultimately terrible, it was a voice he couldn't have invented, but it suited him like skin. It was the voice of the Butcher Boy, Francie Brady, a voice heard first in the head of Irish writer Patrick McCabe. The Butcher Boy was his novel, and Jordan didn't want to direct it. But when he started to work on its screenplay, he found he had no choice. The voice wouldn't leave him. He'd grown up hearing it, after all. "It's the voice of rural Ireland," he says, "the surreal pleasure in the ordinary you used to find there. I grew up in Dublin, not the country. But I knew that child's voice so well."

Jordan is sitting in the Soho office where he began his Butcher Boy. He talks quietly but with an even rhythm, looking out of the window absently. He's been around a long time, but his magical, complicated visions haven't wavered. There are sickly-sweet sensations in Night in Tunisia, the 1976 collection of short stories which made his young name, which linger still. attitudes in his first, impressionistic novel, The Past, which surface in the sweep of Michael Collins. All his films are dreams. false memories. The sensuous fairytale landscape of The Compuny of Wolves seeps into the London of The Crying

The Butcher Boy may be the first time the source of those dreams has been reached. It's set in the Ireland of the early 1960s. Its young boy, Francie, talks to the Virgin Mary and to aliens, to fish in the river and to his best friend. It's an imaginative world so rich that, when his best friend abandons him, it bursts its banks, bloodily drowning the "real" world around him as he seeks vengeance on his neighbours. It's the Ireland Neil Jordan grew up in.

"One of the reasons I wantwith the world around you. You were told that God spoke to you personally. When I was a child, I spent half my time in a world that was not real at all. I remember being told at school that when God wanted priests, you just heard his voice. He said, 'I'll choose you', and there was

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Neil Jordam 'It's a story of repression of emotion, of cultural deprivation, of people who can't even say they love each other

years with my hands on my ears in case I heard that voice saying, 'Neil'. It was like being connected to another world. These things are very real to a child. Ireland wasn't really penetrated by the outside world until the late Sixties. It was a place outside time in a way, a preserved world. It was a world of madness, actually,"

It was a world of more than religion. Francie's acquaintance with the Virgin Mary is no ed to do the movie was to rein- more real to him than the Sixties' start, vent that world," he says. "I American horror comics he deremember that mental aimos- vours, or the science-fiction emotion," Jordan agrees, "It's a that. I just wanted to run release of The Crying Game gave phere so well, the mixture of in- films he sees. Francie makes no nocence and savagery, the distinction. He's lost in a world a story of people who can't even strange cruelties, At school and of wonder. So was Jordan. "The say they love each other until at church, you were told about church's imaginative realities realities that had nothing to do could be transferred to Dracula. To The Twilight Zone," he remembers, "stuff you saw on television.

"When the Virgin Mary appears in the film, I thought about using a theremin, so landing. You tend to live in that world when you're a kid. It's nothing you could do about it. hard to remember it exactly

"I wandered around for two now, and I don't want to go on cence ruins him. It's this perabout it. I don't want to caricature that time. I didn't want ation, that Jordan identifies to in the film."

The character whom Francie most resembles is the boy in Volker Schlöndorff's film of Günter Grass's The Tin Drum. But where that child stops growing, standing for the suppressed horror of the Nazi Germany he's born into, Irish Francie seems to swell with the repressions of his town. It's as if he's the id of Ireland, freezing at the

story of cultural deprivation, it's they're dead. That's very true of the Ireland I know. But it's true of other countries, too. Look at the United States. No matter how many therapists you go to see, they don't teach you how to deal with your own feelings."

Francie himself represses she'd sound like a spaceship almost nothing, except the desire to grow up. He keeps his child's world of games and dreams pristine, until his inno-

was so extraordinary I had to ask sonal suppression, this desperwith most deeply of all. "He acbastard!' It's down-home rural tually refused to believe that his stuff, I wasn't like that. I grew world of childhood certainties up in the suburbs of Dublin. I read and I scribbled." would end," he says with animation, "I remember feeling In the decades since, Jordan that so clearly. We grew up near a big old Guinness estate that

has never completely lost that attachment to boyhood. It's no wonder that, in all his dealings kid I was in its trees every day, in the compromised, "adult" world of Hollywood, he seems hardly to have been touched. He change at 10 or 11, when they still thinks of himself as a mardidn't want to play any more. I ginal character, just as he did "It is a story of repression of remember not wanting to do when I first met him, before the

and the stuff coming out of him him his first Hollywood success. He's since made Interview with him to stop - Ya spermy little the Vampire and Michael Collins, major releases. Surely he's been tempted, along the way, to change his nature?

"I just want to make independent films," he says. "The Butcher Boy is a Warner Brothers movie, so the conversation is absurd. But whether it's a small movie set in Ireland or London or a big studio movie, I want to make it with the same spirit, the same free-

The Butcher Boy is released

A WEEK IN THE ARTS DAVID LISTER

poured on poor old John Prescott because he decided. after his dousing at The Brits, to stay doggedly on so that he could watch Fleetwood Mac. Had he hung on wet and furious for Shola Ama or All might have redeemed at least a little street cred for New Labour, But Fleetwood Mac?

As it happens, I'm with Prescott on this one. From where I sat at last Monday's show, Fleetwood Mac gave the best set not by a whisker but by a mile, and the London Arena can rarely have seen so many people of all ages up and boogle-ing as during that all too brief 15 minutes or so. The state of middle-aged

rock, even for those bands that do not possess the everethereal Stevie Nicks, remains reasonably healthy as far as live performance goes. What is more puzzling, and a lot more interesting, is the state of middle-aged rock writing. The Stones' new album is actually rather good, but does not contain a true classic. Paul Simon's new musical is his worst album ever; Paul McCartney's latest signals a renaissance, but he also has not really delivered for years. Pete Townshend and Ray Davies, writers of English eccentricity, whose songs captured both the optimistic spirit and the neuroses of an era, seem to have given up.

It's a massive irony that live performance, which was supposed to limit the lifespan of rock 'n' rollers, still sees the big names playing big arenas. Yet composing, which makes no demands on waist or hairlines, finds them wanting. Roger Daltrey of The Who once told me that he was disappointed that all pop composers can deal with young love, but none had tackled the subject of middleaged angst. He was particularly disappointed, he added, that The Who's composer. Pete Townshend, had not tackled the subject, a subject that would have appeared made for him. Townshend in turn told me that he and his

SOME SCORN has been contemporaries had a youthful energy in the Sixties which was now gone.

It's true that most rock and pop composers seem rooted in their first subject matter. find it unsuitable and virtually throw in the towel. I've nev-Saints, the cynics say, he er really understood why. In no other musical form, from opera to jazz, are writers redundant in their middle years.

They are often on the verge of their greatest works. And even if they find the neuroses and occasional joys of middle age inappropriate, why can't the pop composers simply continue with the subject matter of their youth? There should be no reason why Paul McCartney couldn't write "Penny Lane" now. But somehow we don't expect him to, and he doesn't expect himself to either.



among the writers that the medium is no longer appropriate for them, leading to a sense of insecurity. That struck me when I received a phone call recently from a polite chap saying he ran a band, it was about to go on a tour and could I give them a plug? Which little garage outfit was this, I wondered wearily? "We're called Fairport Convention," he said helpfully. The architects of British electric folk should be a lot more sure of themselves. So should all our middle-aged songwriters. As far as street cred goes, a great new song is worth more than a dozen jugs of water poured over a Cabinet minister.

DID

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THE WEEK ON RADIO ROBERT HANKS

STANLEY Kubrick is supposed to have banned screenings of his film of A Clockwork Orange in Britain after a copycat killing. As yet, however, recorded incidents of extreme violence in- things improved, but only to spired by radio drama are thin on the ground, and the picture is unlikely to be changed by last Saturday's adaptation of A Clockwork Orange on Radio 4. The problem for radio violence arrives, but some wear worse is partly one of emotional intensity - seeing blood being inevitably more disturbing than hearing about it. Even more importantly, though, it's a matter of sheer comprehensibility: thumps and gurgles, the suggestive chorus of faulty plumbing that stands in for most forms of assault short of a gunfight, are too unspecific to be much help to the listener.

Of course, comprehensibility can be overrated - some of the best radio plays are ones that are prepared to let go of clarity and nuance every so often, if it means boosting action and emotional realism. But in this case there were too many imponderables going on. John Hardy's electronic soundtrack, thumping and glooping away in the background, competed with dialogue spoken largely in Nadsat, the future slang Anthony Burgess invented for the book - a complex jargon which on radio reduces every conversation to a matter of squally muskrats in the upchuck and noddying the flobalobs.

The net result was that, to begin with at any rate, it was hard to make out anything much, except perhaps the splash of metaphorical bathwater swiftly followed by the splat of a figurative baby. Adding oc-

casional translation only served to set the listener's zoobies, or teeth, on edge and oobivat, or

went to ruin, so when I was a

I'd be Robin Hood. I remem-

ber when kids' tastes began to

around in my Robin Hood cos

tume. And then you end up in

the tree on your own, and you

say 'Where have they all gone?'.

in other ways? "The boy who

plays him looks the spitting

image of me when I was that

age," he chuckles. "His face is

so huge! But he's from rural Ire-

land, and kids grow up pretty

fast there. I thought the lan-

guage in the script was so bad

he might be upset, but he said,

'No bother'. So he starts acting,

Was he like the boy Francie

kill, the pace and authenticity. Later, as the ear adjusted, leave you wondering if Burgess's original is all it's cracked up to be. Every imagined future is bound to pale besides reality when it eventually than others. It's symptomatic of Burgess's failure that he based Nadsat on Russian, apparently in the hope that it would not date. As things have turned out, it has dated extraordinarily badly - no one would now think that Russia could ever compete with the United States as a centre of teenage culture, and the very idea fixes A Clockwork Orange firmly in its Cold War context

The same dualism blunts the novel's moral: in the person of Alex, the victous teenage thug with the passion for Beethoven, Burgess projected a fairly clearcut choice between moral freedom with all its attendant evils, and goodness achieved at the cost of individual will. He seems to have been unprepared for the cosy blandness that has overtaken civilisation - where Hemen and Hell is the title of a Radio 2 documentary about Joe Jackson, and where all the threat and beauty is soothed out of music by Brian Kay's leechlike tones. At least Kay in person is more tolerable than Petroc Trelawney, who last week spent Brian Kay's Sunday Morning

speculating on what Brian might be up to on his holidays in New Zealand. Radio rarely inspires violence, but this came

Please telephone 01789 26533 for further details.

JONESY, FANCY A nuddle wit your princess talry angel cake Meer for motors?

AMES U LOVEABLE migm

JULIE THANKS FOR another magi-cal year, see you soon in our house - fory.

IC - STILL MY involutes over gym teacher in the world. I love you,

ALL.

JANICE THE WOMAN who has everything, love me.

JJ HOW CAN I express the way I leaf for you in eight words (financial shortcomings) I can't bugget.

M

ANE, WHATEVER WE DO who over we go I will love you. Riche

Joy Boy Racer

Love you lots

Be my Valentine

always.

Your BooBoo

A LEXANDER NUMBER ONE, man of my dreams you bring out the sunshine wherever you are around valentine you are divine left so it tonight with wine A NO LEG overs yet, but soon soon, GG.

AMADIS YOU ARE my only lower and pleasure always Anne. AMADIS YOU ARE my comy and pleasure always Anne.

AMBER... VERB. SAR Stick with me! "Barrin (S.A.)

ANNIE YOUR THE best thing that has eaced Calm. ANDRE YOUR THE best tring that swer heppened Calm.

ANDREA THANKS FOR the most vivid dream ever, I wish you wouldn't behave yoursel so other take care love James.

ALAN THERE WERE "recibiles, but you're the one I fell for Love Son.

CHOO CHOO LOVE you always:
sweep'es.
CHICK+ LOVE YOU forever you
CHEEP ONE WE'LL fly together
tows orm;
CMEC, MY LOVE for you is on so
deep, if only I could by you three
wasks steep! love MIC.
CLEVER CLOGS TORTIOISE in the
house! love Tiex.
CHEAP TRAMP, LOVE you and
your tables, Paul ABIO I WANT to hog you torsver ALEXANDRIA HAPPY VALEN-TIMES day all our love murrow ANNA YOUNG "WILL YOU MARTY MO" TONY BISHOP, HOVE YOU.

A DIAMOND "WHITE from "The Bank" menager, has led to lots of ANNE SUTTON, EEHI lat lady you're the one for me! Love from



ALYSON, MY STAR invisible in the day, this petrol in my ca.
"ANNIMAL SO SHY and small, dreaming you were bold and tell" wishing you're my vetentine, Jez will you be mine?

A MESSAGE READ by thousands but meant just for one, my love tor you deer Asten can never be undone. undone.
AGING SHORT-ARSED legal eagle loves madly his little dribbles.
ANNAMAL LOVE YOU forever lift A PHOPOSAL Will you buy a Gold Heart and show someone you care? Say Yea.
AWAITING OCTOBER 14TH love you sout so much C. you so much C ANDY LOVE YOU shrays and for-with Arsenal. All my love, K.
ASMA "I LOVE you"-honour me the chance to take you out: "Armee thurselse bale bhash?" Ro.
ANNE PACKMAN Happy Valentine's Day my dear wife I'm gorns be with you for the rest of my life, handle you will be the sec

Meivin xxxx A LOVE YOU loads.

BARABARA, HOPE YOU enjoy

BROWNIE AFTER TEN years of marriage is your gun still for him? C.B.xxx BUNNY, WILL YOU be my valen-

tine? love foxy. BECKS LOVE YOU lots A, x x x

BABA YOU GAVE me your hear! had no walls only a door don' lock me out with love me.

BALD I DON'T see you often but I still adore you love NKI BEJERLEY BE MY valentine eighth

away, love Spacedust BULLILALOW, DREAMING OF you

BARY YOU'RE THE best, love yo

BADGER DO WE have a date is

june 831 always lady B. BELNA ROAROAW! LOVE you

BK BLANCH MY runner beam

BEV, I LOVE you lots. We do have

BEAVIS,

everything, can't wait

to walk down that

Aisle. Love you . . .

Truly, madly, deeply

Bertie x x x

BUBBLES-THE MOUNTAINS and the sea are now behind us. We now look to tidal rivers and edu-cational choice I love you very

ACOZIE AND PEEPEE low

Catchie and dady respectively. BESTEAN DON'T EVER 'nop

love always bridesmald BACKGAMMON QUEEN, SNOTTY potty, dotty, and groty but you are still top lotty.

BETH, IF LOVE returns, "in here
Your best triend, whetever, Milo

BOWLESY IF I had a million dol

you're the expert-Scamp. BEAR I LOVE your Steek Puri. Love

BUTCH VEGGIE ARTISTE, let me

BNBH Love you to the moon. Linbi

BEAM ADORE YOU and bellybut

BEAUTIFUL BECCA, BRIGHT 69

a wooden spoon! BEAVER THUNKING OF you in your BEAVER THUNKING OF you in your

BISCUIT, thinking of you - blond and blue - drinking, dancing

smoking too Peta. BEAST, STILL CRAZY for you after

all these years. Beauty BOOZY, YOU'RE MY Broccoll and

Nechos. Love res. BUG EYED BEAUTY, you are my

treasure forever, cuddles, ideses and truch more, lots of love. Mommic Highly Martian Monates

DID MY HEART

ROMEO+JULIET

BENJI, REMEMBER ME? I'm cor ing back to England in May, will you take me all the way? Mar-trax

You are my

overflows , but empties mpletely each solitery

BRIDGET COBBALD: "SHE'S irruitier than a chocolete orange and twice as sweet". Whatever happens, I low you.

B ARSCHAL ARE red and comellines yellow, if Poult says no wall you be my lettow? A.

Bazz Man Happy Valentines Day, Love Merce ed.

CARINO MIO SABES 19 AMO tracho la 060. CHOO CHOO LOVE you olways:

Your tathoo, Paul
CATLIONS I LOVE you very much Snuffyl
CHI E LA plu bella del mondo? ASSUMBA, BE MY valentine for

CHICKPEA, BY MY valentine forever? Love you, Buthorso:
CARLY THANKYOU FOR making
my life complete. I love you
patch.
CHRIS YOU ARE the most wondertut person I have ever met. I wis
love you shews love Chertene.
CHRISSIE WRIGHT OF Cottingham I sell love you!
CHRISTINE. YOUR LOVE is like a
tine wine. Twenty one units a
week are not amough, Yours forever Calve.
CAROLE AND LILLY all my love
from Bengladesh
CHRISTINE SNURS, STILL dreaming of you, Bell Mole.
C.M. AN DITESTANDING. CHRISTINE SNUGS, STILL dream-ing of you, BEI Mole.
C.M. AN OUTSTANDING perfor-mance every week for THC. An my love to the "Man of the Match" TS. CHUCKIE, LET'S GET cuddling. All

EGG FISH AND em and I love you more than anything, that is true. E- You don't need a valentine mee-sage to know how much I love you. Se my lobster now and always. always.

ERIC AM I talking to the trees?

You're so preclous to me, wish I could make you as happy. Always your Irland, Boots

SARAH,

colour.

Dino

EYEBROW KISSES TO my tends

Astro.
ELKLET: THERE'LL ALWAYS be space in my elknest for you- Elk-

St

Watentine's

FECK, ARSE, DRINK, now you'r

bles are sammer love the boy.

thankyou for everything FATBELLY ON MY left but es

Flossy,

My most perfect

English Rose,

Love from Me

XXX

FLOPPY LOVES BUBBLES, Bub

FINE WORDS BUTTER no paranip

FROM ONE TOAD to another

FOR ALL THE triple david's there

FRIENDLY CHILD, DEAREST gen-tie one. Never truer love nor deeper sorrow. P

Frankle and Johnny Valentine Reunion 13th, 14th, 15th Ange Delight xxx be there.

FRUITY FROLIKER, b

beauty, wanton walker you fait out on the autobi

FUNKY LOVEBUG Do you

LOSSY SO NEAR SO far

G. MY WIFE, 21/09/1997 b

day of my die. love always D.
GILLYWIFE SENDING YOU huge
materia of love hub xxx

ILLIE CON CARNE. Hot in duro-

GOD DID IT and you are hand-some, clever and very special. GUCH GIVES HEARTS strength

IANNA B - " ITS all about you

only you. ENE, CAN'T WAIT for Tues. Halen.

Love sheays, Helen. GIVE ME A SNOG Scattle dog! love from Posh Bird xxx

wom Post Bird look GERDY: PEDY PUDDING and pie. INI loves you. GOOD MOTHING MIRS chip love, trouble at mill.

GRENDALDENE - Fency room ser-vice again? Love Stoopid GENTLE ELF STRONG, deep.

heeler love sharps Lucinda Gold Heart Day is today, buy a Gold Heart and support The Vari-sty Club.

Give Love, Buy a Gold Heart end show the world you care.

Gros Bisous A mes persets charts et mas oisceux. A bientot. Mar-

GARY, I THINK I'm in love with you. Silly fool? I hope not. GODFRITH LOVES TISHA. Howil

Day-

love you more

come Christen the carpot with me ill
CLAIRE BUNTEN has gone down under, why it took so long I still wonder, in November I would have been half gled, now I just feet really said, enal me Love At CONRAD, WILL YOU be the author of my love life my dubliner, and my lever-pitch yours, Tess
CATHERINE OR Is it Katherine?
CATHERINE OR Is it Katherine?
Looking lorward to something THEATRICAL, derling...regards, The Velver Jacket.
CHRISTOP LOVE YOU more than anything Lara, Paul
CRISTOPHER I'M LOOKING forward to opending the rest of my life with you, Happy Valentines day, H. than my hair

DEZY BLONDE TRULEY deeply madily dylan, dog forever EVERY NIGHT SHOULD be like in-day in istanbuil ELEYEN YEARS AND six months DARLING PETER THE people my heart is yours for ever debearched (but divine) downs xxxxxx. and three weeks and today is out wedding day. I love you. BLIZABETH, I LOVE your Entry Pro DEAREST WW FOR IN LLEN YOU ARE the best, I do-d small hotels, weaving, laughing and for tick crosses-my love, Ruby.

...a 🕑 says you care.

However you say I ♥ YOU... ·

DAVID-YOU ARE cuddly, conside ate, charming and effectionate. love you very much. Rosemary DON'T LET YOUR dreams be empty, love the medieval babel

DON'T LET YOUR creems bit as empty, love the medievel babe! DARLING BEAN, I'LL stay as near, as true to you as heart could pray. Forever, lengs. DERRICK FARRELL, LOOKING forward to being Mire Farrelf - what do you think? Marie xxx DAYLING MOCSE, LET me dry shose big quiddy suffers. DARLING HONEY! love you more said more want to make it offical? W/g.

Wig DARLING CAROL, FAMILIAR acts are beautiful through love.

900.
DEAR NORAH ALL the very very

HEAR NUTURE TO SEE AND INDEED THE SEE TO 1998 and Indeed the business from Nicol with love XXXX DEAR RACHEL IT was always a series out with a scouser bu

s only my heert you stole! REST MARK. APPORTE-MO

la tete de Nigel. Amities Guy

EXCEPTION TO SELECT THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPER

CHIS. BOO BOO YOUR DOCTOR DECLARES LOVE No.

naughty nurse. Sweet, sparkle-eyed Sue, sing your song with

ms. DARLING S OUR love will endure beyond the magic of this brief

shared breath. DOVER MORE KISSES street

ACTIVEN MICHE MASSES STREET amazing kisses kings road, bur-ford, champagne, silk scarves, goats cheese, zamati, limes, promises kept, rodeon, aar nib-bling, charterhouse squarel want

you more.

DAVE, I NEED your love. God speed your love to met Jenice

DRUNK AS DRUNK on turpen-

tine". To M from D DRAG QUEEN 1978 essay

thing improves at least DUCATI DARE DEVIL has leathers will ride!! love Petal xx

DAVID, I would give you my last Rolo any day, See you in Paris. DOOKINS - Coocky Coocky Coo-love my mammy manchide. From

your other big baby. Doth!! DOM LOVE YOU always love Karte

and Jay Jay 300r DEBBIE I'M ON my kness buy ms DEBBIE I'M ON my kness buy ms

(reading)
DEAR KELLY, Love, hugs, hedge-hogs and gorillas. Inertana?
DARLING W, NEED u, want u, love

U, YOUR M. DANIELLE MCDONALD See YOU

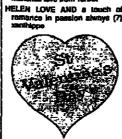
DAMELLE MICDONALD See you brought and I will treet you to a ble. Love always xx \$'s DEAREST SYD, Happy Valentines. Late of love Musley. DEAR KATE, I hope we have a won-denful valentines day. I love you

love's auction overdue, see met DEAR, PET BAT, stay well, Every-

Tenaissance man
SENTRA-.E TAIMES toujours, je
Canyols des roses - S.
MIRELA L'YÉ LAID my dreams et
beby you drive me crazy.
FECK. ARSE, DRINK, now you

February 14th 1998

AND IN HAND at the edge of Daddy Stuart, big sand we dance to the power ful play of tally's tangerine tam bouring. will you be my first HILARY FAITH JONES be my me Marken? Robin Valentine. HOW DO YOU scare an easter rab-bit? scream boe,chocolate burny. HAPPY VALENTINE RHOMBUS maximus love from Turbol Love form MIAMH DEAR POO ARE you mad for it? Happy Valentine's Day, love from



For Heather

A Valentine should be for life, and not just for today, though fun it is, to be someone's valentine, for a day.

Life is more than a rose in the mail. as blooms fade to thorns, count how many yester-valentines, are not here today, with a rose.

I am still here, silly me, but probably not for long, if you want to be my valentine, stop this madness and hear the song.

I will take you for life, brave me, and nag you sometimes, with love, I will cherish you, and smother you, with roses and rhymes.

H ANOTHER YEAR. Loves still the JANELLA, LUCKJEST GRL of ther same. J.
HAIKU FOR HILARY- Lightning JULIE CHAPMAN your really sup-bather fresh bank our love's own dune went better than cake, to same. J. HAIKU FOR HILARY- Lightning blinks flash back, our love's own J.Wign. Hannah exciting but risky

more and more, Wow. HEAVEN KNOWS I'M not miser able now you're here stir HEAVEN IS NOTHING co

HB Loves Missey HRHxxxx .. But Squirrel loves her more.

SHSHSH!! HIPPO COME AND wallow in the mud with me and we'll stick together for ever and ever with love frazzell. HAPPY VALENTINES DAY to the

know.

HOWEVER YOU SAY! love you, a Gold Heart says you care... buy one today for sick, disabled and disadventaged children. HY NOTICE HERALDS angel travelling to October Nirvana.

HI BABE. SUPRISE! glad I've got you wou. smellbacs. always, days, years, eternities.

FOR ALL IN my mind, of all mankind, I love but you alone. FATFREE HONESTLY YOUR chut FIRST MATE TO crew-how about the mask tonight? FLUFFY BUNNY, I love yo IAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY GO 181 THE COOLEST bake in Leith love Honey Stanty. . TOUCHY FEELY Huge Circles

LOVE YOU so very much HBB. LOYE YOU Gheahdl as long at sun shines, stars gillier, heart best. WOPILOPLOP LOPOVOPE yopo I LOVE YOU Hezal. On we go with our journey, and FUZZI too.

CLAUDIUS te amo LOUISE

XXXX VYBEAR RENT CD1, track19 " micht do. definitely" all my low N A DRAB, dark world your beauty brings me light.

LOVE MYSELF just like you and
often torget to mention that I love
you too. Assor IDEPENDENT CHISWICK GIRI maybe you can take ma up grade at no extra cost. me WILL BE your celandine if you w

one may our love go on and on. JAME DOVESTONES RESERVOR , FLY WITH me my gorge terby B. Jenny My Draylon sofe b today tool T. ANET BE MY Singapora

AN GREYBOY ABBS wolf gro

Jones Skirt Is Abscent Pip Pip Cleave



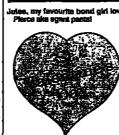
dupa even better than cake. Li di love always from your pro-happy husband Scott. I-FLEX DREAMING A little drea of you love tunetees.

Jules: Hope you have a lovely weekend. All my love, Nigel XXX

JON, READ MY Sps I Love You JUN YOU BOONA Love I T m

JANESK, WHAT WITH Hattle.

Jacqui To see her is to love ber, And love but ber for eve For nature made her wbat she is, William



LISS FROM A rose and you have been loved on a perfect day line one book one andymion KENNY DUST, I love you - A fishy 12857 KATE MY LOVE for you is forever. Eight months a short time to wait Paul (AREN'S HARL) 1998 I shall be 7 you'll be 33 KAREN, THIRD TIME LUCKY Won't lose you again. Andrew. IND HEARTED? Give some love

to the people who need it most. Buy your Gold Heart today and help sick, disabled and disadvantaged children. IM-KIM YOUR BEAUTY excede the wonders of mature and I low YOU KARLA A VALENTIME'S me KARLA A VALENTMETS message-Cancel the wedding and honey-moon too, we'll walt another year to say I dot Love yel Dom. L. STILL BLOODY love you.- K. L. LOVING YOU from Hillend to Holland — and book againt J. DRTL ICL LES resultate du jury britanique-futriche douze polms. Austre twelve points AREM PUT YOUR trainess on I'm gonne chase you round the bed-mon, love John.

Karen -Let's make babies. Love Bubblekins

IFE'S RICH PATTERNS

REBCHEN. LOOKING ARRANWARDS, TO my during M, with all my love, this valentines day and stways. C,xxx LOVE YOU ALWAYS darlis' from your suffolk aweetheant LION MARTY EVE Lucy and Corinna L2X VSS801 THAT'S the clue, mee LOR MON LE coaur votre-votre dia-monte mon. Chempagne Paul RA

Has Grace.

JUSTINE ALWAYS YOURS Greg.

JUSTINE ALWAYS YOURS Greg.

JUSTINE ALWAYS YOURS Greg.

LITTLE CLAIRE, I am beyond all doubt now. Lovre shrays...

LITTLE CLAIRE, I be beyond all well independent, Love

James.

MEGGINS, READ OUR story this week in The independent, Love

JAM.

ICE LEGS. FANCY

light of my Rie. Love from patient electrician

MANNY BROWN Happy

NANNY GREY HEDDY

AUL- A SLEEPLESS

PLAY WITH ME day-day love the

PUPS, ALWAYS MY velentine. With

P. I WILL love you until you are

PAINTED LADY, YOUR love B

PUSS, CHESTNUT TREE awai

precisest of the spe PETER LOSING LOVE IS BE & win

IN UP A Gold Heart and

PARKS, PICNICS, PATRICIA-1

PRACTICE CUPID'S CODE today

wear your heart on your sleeve-left sleeve if you're looking for love - right sleeve if you're in love

PETRINA my favourite contempo rary artist with love Simon.

PETE let me be your Juliet and I'll

OCAHONTAS I STILL love yo

PSYCHIC FORCES PHOM me ves-cular bundles of extrasormany mystical fibres lodged in the lower region of the pingsis (and upper left ventriloquist) signal movement of fantospodistic pro-portions towards shentockolous and altogether rather pantock-clous times. You'd be a fool not to give that girl a chance. URI Geller

LA SOPPRE ET LE Mag "I Love you" PAWNY AVEC doesn't seem like LEUR CUP OF TEA, SERONT nearly enough ENSEMBLE POUR LA VIE. PARCE words to sum up QUE JE T'AIME. all that I feel MA PETITE CHICKIE about you. Pete

LIEBSCHEN RIGHT UP to the moon and back Happy Valentine's Day. LOVE IS A contract of und ing and commitment LEOPARD SKIN, SPARKLING laugh, generous mouth, feisty women, be my Stolle Artels, from your Worthington bitter. LIJAN SORRY I won't see you today but I am thinking of you. Lots of love Mst. NOW BEY HOW about LOVE AND HAPPINESS to my beloved Sylvie on this Deyl Your husband! AA LAA LOUISE, love you m NOEL ROWRI ALL my

UGS? IT CAN only meen John LION, WITH ALL my love from you JAV - i ENJOYED your * V97 look forward to V98 Love to spare? Give some love to the people who need it most. Buy your Gold Heart today and help sick, disabled and disadventaged JON, I'VE LOST my pants over you yuml love you lots, your very own divor.

> sunsets together forever. LOUISE AND JULIAN, heve a fan testic Jay - congraviations and may you always be happy together. All our love Doborah and Gereth.
>
> LOVE THE CHIPOLATA kid very much love Selfy xxx.
>
> LEON HOPE YOUR Xmas was as associal as when was you'll never ONCE ISN'T ENOUGH cho del as mine was you'il never orgodian, all my love H to augutes, as my love in KAREN: Put your trainers on, i'm gonne chase you round the bad-room. Love John xxx LEMONS PREDICTABLE? MY amenicectomy was much worce-but I was 'ARD 'coz I'm a valleys girl thinking of you and missing

St Valentine's Day 7

MUITAS MEMORIAS, MUITO

ble turdp.

MINOTTER, FEEL MY force! love your jedet knight
MY SUNSHINE SOUL my perfect day my untained love you make sweet hate docty.

ME THE THIRTEENTH duke of Crandatoh in love with a married. with Pat? How rementic! POOR SICK MIKEY loves puss booboo happy anniversary MRS P HEARTLY biggiy

woman? absolutely MONKEY LOTS OF love to infinity. - Øig P 2002. MY FAVOURITE BLUE, I'm madly in MAGLLY YOU ARE my s MARTETY YOU AHE MY SURGRIPS !

NOW YOU BUSING.

MART SOME THINGS are
inevitable. Love, DA.

MORAG, HAMISH WILL sheays
love you, lets cough logather.

MY MONKEYS WONDER bra
makes on children by be in year. tes me shudder she is very ghty Indeed. Etemal love your POPPET, (C/O"CHARTERS"). Lats cuddle up in bed tonight...and and her Peter Rabbit stonies! MSS P, you are my Bristol Massiv

MAGGIE MINE ALL mine for all time; your greatest fan.
MR BUSY, WAITING for a bit of your time! Little miss petient. M.B. When the bove are a-bed and the enimals ted the weshing done,

I'll be there with a hug and a clock goes and you pull on your clothes. All my love P.B MERI BUCHI I love you crazy mad

G. MOLLIE, I'M OFF my trolley, about determit, love Chez you. Happy stateanth, love Chez. MARCUS FOUR YEARS on and stat. struggling to top the pizza. I love you Nicola. MAK, AFTER 5 YEARS I still have that feeling I love you so much cause you do ell the cleaning. IRM. THANKSI It just keeps get-ting better. Love from MTM.

HISTER WOLFIE: LOVE you lots! MOOKIE PLUS ONE sends love to nearly ded MY DARLING PHILIP I love you for ever and forever. M. XXX MOOMIN, MR TICKLE wents gree eggs and hami MARRAIGE IS ABOUT shering, caring, understanding and being latitud Ditu

MON CHERI: Just to let you know how much you meen to me. When to our next cruise? Love Mariene. MMSI YOU ARE my bonnie Princ with all of my heart, george PSYCHIC FORCES FROM the vee-



EIPYN GA'I PLIS dwi isio (

MR MUPPET, MEET me in trovic of the fire lonight, I will bring the video! I love you Doris.

MY VALENTINE RISTIC for eve

ADEMOISELLE CLOCHE, WEAR

MATT

All you did was

walk into a bar in

NYC - changing mu

life forever.

Be my Valentine

always.

APRIL

Q LOVES XXX to GTREE PETE Meet me l with honeybun and buste.

"Laughter" Happy Anniversary.

TY SCOTTERS **Quentin** Happy 1st MY SCOTTISH THISTLE- love yo with all my heart - Husb Valentine Day MR DOCN, I see you at work every day, I want you to be my little sol digr love Bilco. O Love you Now a MR O'NEL I love you though I so it not enough, Mrs O'Nell Forever lots of Love Wonder MARY YOU'VE SUNVI ME YOUR S

MORE THAN WORDS can say. However you say! love you, a Gold Heart says you care. MEL WAITS UNDER amber lights RUTH THANKYOU FOR most ROSE YOUR MY bobble hat all my love and happy VD, I miss you lots RETRING ROK ROCK with me RARRY, MUTCH WARM, strew set my jumpers, borrow my car, but please come whale spotting with me soon, love Bambl

RUDE WIFE LOVES blues ten xxx. RACHEL 4 MARCUS: I will never ROD-TIME OUT was the best place to meet. Love always Floria. ROBERT LONG BEFORE our first TO MY SURVEY nose I will be home soon yours lorewer Mossup.

T-REX PARK YOUR Porsche in my garage in anytime.

TESSA "SORTED BY pairs, they will, are seen - by fourstains cool, and stractows green" Edward.

TO MY DARLING Sazzh, you make avent thing possel. ROSES ARE RED, violets are blue ROCKVILLE ROMEO: MY

ROB, TU M'AS finnce dans la lan

R - What your love has done for me, look in the pushchair and you shall see! Love Mxxx

ROBERT, "IF MUSIC be the lood

or row pay to:

XXX

RUPS TOOTS my deerest cham
when I need a friend, your the
one, breeidnest, burch, disnorthree,
will you be my valentee
ROCREE DOOBLE DOO: How you,
huge n tieses. Rego.

RICHARID PAN YOU'R simply the
best your aver loving Wandy Troonly NUSHKET, BIG CUDDLES there NATALIE THUMPER WELLS I WE phy TOSEMARY THANK YOU for NURSE EDWARDS YOU are the BOSES ARE RED Violets are blue, don't get me in your helt, coe I stick like glue. Love from Puddin

MAMH - AS PARENTS , we are adoring, your development, we're following, your cuteness and love, we're just wallowing! but please stop the bloody publical! AM YOU GORGEOUS creature Sercy being stroked? I love Rx SWEETPEA PRINCESS KEEP the crumbs warm Grampy Chops. STEVIEI TEN YEARS on the world MEIL AMOS, ROSES are red, and so is your sar this valentine mee-sage from me your best wife so tarl look NKGEL TABONY ROSES are red, your new shop is plum. Let's hope it all goes well, I love you, yum yum Chaire xxx. is our toaster. SARAH-JANE IN MARCH maybe your Bully man STINKY BURKY BROWN bear pa bollom no heir I love you

Sex Machine you know who you are Tonight at the store condom4u.com. I'll be waiting and prepared. Liv CD

pletely, honestly, Jo. SUTRUN (BASS) YOU don't know, try it you'd like it, and let's make it last all night. June '98. OH, TIGGY, WOULD be bircher of STARGUY MEANS MILLIONS to his devoted triend POLS SIMON GUESS HOW much I love you Miranda SARAH, KEEP BLETHERINGI IONE my nether regions your well-hung love God asks "will you be my yearstin?"
Of MR THIN lips, I don't trust you,
but I can't help losing you
O MY LOVE'S libe a red, red rose,
that's nestly in June; O my love's
libe the melody that's for 30 years
sweetly play'd in furne-Myrddin.
O,R NO MORE poosle times, Just
hub B.P. SMUDGE, WE'LL HAVE a blus

room and i'll sit at your Moosh loves you SPUT, I LOVE you lots, Blu. Ok Mrs Dolphin " Wh Mex Delphin come down to STLIART I GIVE you my love, take the guil with me IL SWEEETIP IFANCUA BITTTS yorand we will be together for ever.

SMELLY, LET'S HOPE this years # SUE, CALM DOWN, relex, you, Steve. JEPER SUEPERIOR SUEPE bearie chide mr p.
POROS PARIS OR east croydon i
doesn't matter where i am [1]

ISAIRA! iya nos vamos! iya nos vamos! iya nos vamos! PUPATA, ELEPHANTINE LOVE from across the cesans. Missing you, especially tonight. With love from slow Doris X. ipara Real Madrid! ixxxx M.A.F.!

SCHMALISON, LUBRICOUS

there left to say except love you.

Pigs.

SCRUMPY, LET'S CRUISE offplate in our own lists boat PAUL GSOH VGIB EIFO WITC SUITS YOU LORD battersby S. COME AND go with me to SQUEEZE ME BUCKETS Jann Lave you SUNSHINE THANKS FOR every thing. I will always love you hilk. SHAILA, YOU STILL have one book PETER DO YOU believe in mira-cles? I know that I do NOW! love Tink you overdue. Dominic SQUIRREL, YQU HAVE my heart until the end of time. Your'e all ! need. My love, my valentine. K. PERRO CANNOT WAIT for pup in POOH LOVES PIGLET and little POOCH THE MONKEY'S bad againi love ratheg xxxx. RINCESS HOBBIT, LOVE to the

SHOW YOU CARE, buy a Gok Heart and help The Variety Clut SARAH YOU ARE etill what I love. Sowers. STROKED LIKE CATS? I love you VMPHONIC C BEAT the clock vic MOSO, Love classic ledy.

SWEET SAINT DORMOUSE: SCHOOL LAUNDRY French barns, wood in 1 too?? SUPALUMP LOVE YOU IN than brenty years ago

SARAH, love you more than my hair colour. Dino

TO MY PUSSY, love you fore

love you anyway, Baid Eagle. TO PEAS I love you torever love

TO A CRACKINGLY beautiful wells-den nut love from a pleman TO MY SURVIY nose I will be frome

everything special. Thank you, all my love Marc.

Just-3ree Sprobiles The Intelligent Person's Introduction Agency

in the fact of the first of the fact of th The Truth Ascor Women Valentines Day - 50% off (Offer closes 23 Feb)

0800 542 3000 MARIA or write to FREEPOST 305 London EC1B 1SY SHARON ROSES ARE red the THETA REMEMBERING J. leaves are green, I'm in love with TESSA ROSES ARE red 2 very

pricidy. I'm 'gonna make you isugh 'cause i know you'm tickly. M.A.
TO BERT LOVE you loads Emms. SARAH, LIQUEURS? O SUE, I love you more than yesterday, miss you, Phil.
TE GUTERO MUCHISTMO Virginia! Thanks for a wonderful past two years, Happy valentines day, All my love, from Adam, xxx TO THE

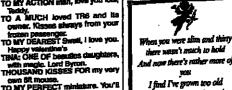
BODY BRAUTIFUL with thighs of steel. breathless in Cuego and overheated in the Galapagos! WHAT NEXT? I CAN'T WAIT





TO CUTIE, WOOTHE poopheed mooseheed love soret bot.
TAFFER WILL YOU marry me? your VICKY, YOU ARE my first, my last and my everything ton you can be my valeraine, I subs. YOU HAVE brightened each day of the last 25 years, I love you very much. PS the Rowers are on the way. I not wards poling TO BERT, Love you loads, from

Valentine's Day is Gold Heart Day... huy a Golf Heart and support their Appeal for sick, disabled and disadvantaged children. Wiley 2000 TO THE MANIC Munchish. All my TISH LETS MELT an icaberg the big together measure hugs the big i penguin. TO VILLAGE IDIOT - back in your VIOLETS ARE BLUE, Roses as red, for 10 years with you I wan champagns in hed! xxx



THOUSAND IGSSES FOR my very carn fit mouse.
TO MY PERFECT ministre. You'll stways be big for ms. Your very own e-male.
TO A SWEET, wonderful, exciting, women from a simple men. Love you, FS.
TSS, WON'T YOU be my Valenting! Love Redneed XXXX
TO MY DARRING moo moo, I love Magoo Cou may have changed in voin But this I know is true it has gone up in proportio To my total love for you Wantedi CHAM

Microco
TO MY TRUE love, you smell funny.
Love you.
TO MY GIMEER prince, shadow I love you, hom ole blue eyes.
THERE WAS A stud called floss, who book a fancy to his boss, he best over backwards, to increase his circulation that doesn't myme but who chose a tose. DRINKERS. Must i and eligibily insbris WEFFYI COME CLOSE, let me prove that this one, she cares; Fi help you remove those hairs from your ears!

his circulation that doesn't myme but who gives a toos.
THOMAS OUR LAST London weekend i love you, widey.
TO MY BEAUTHFUL darling Begum, I'm crazy about you and can't welt to marry you.
TO MY BOY wonder, I's skrays be your stuner hero
T LOVE 85 u, u and me Rich.
TO DAN THE man... with the warment hands, isopest laugh. **WORM** Our first wedded one! All my love as ever. The Bru

TO DAN THE man... with the warmest hands, largest laugh and funliest bottom in the West!
Much Love to you. Bertha x
TO MY MOST beautiful princess from your adoning likehen lad.
TRACEY MAZ MAN be to masle persian Pleasure, this TRACEY NIAZ MAN be to meste nizz bimeresten be golden est near mitchemen tora meste sittle waram ke otoo mitualned love G TANK OO LOTS of love TIG and David THE FEMALE Of the goat species will shays be loved by the Gato to S.A.H. You are the upple of my eye, the cream on my cake and the path in my necicili Love shays S.A.M. XXX
THE FIRST 8700 days since we mot have been lun. here's to the max. 8700.
TO MY LITTLE angel Sah, I love you WIFEY MOORE I love you then ever cuttle love Rob
W LETS WANDER across
dionysten plain, and practice
those teith forms agent, J.
WISE MAN HE says: "Go South on
Northern Line" NUM: I love you!

Youth Club in '71, honeymaan in Blackpool TO MY LITTLE angel Sah, I love you wasn't half fun. Come hell and high water I'll be you man, at home, at work, in TO DORAEMON, I miss you! love EIMO TO SARAH, CHILDE & Rebecca the the caravan. Years go by and life's still as fruity love of my life from Daddy. TO DADDY SAUSAGE with big especially 'coz you're my black-haired beauty.

kisses from murany sausage.
TO MY GRIZZLY bear, with love from your lovely Lion. V xxx
TITIN IS VERY loved from the old ACTO. TO MY PRINCE charles, love eheays your Queen B TO MY SEXY tons, keep smiling. from Big Hairy D. TO THE URISH chef with all the right

To my Darling WISHING YOU A long and happy manlage to me! Love always your R.C.P. p.s narvous yet? WILL AUNTIE MARY'S canary be Caroline, I am sui that 1998 will be

happier in drawers than a ba wards PF in JL wards FF to JL.
WISHING AND MISSING my little
"Giblet" a happy valendines day.
Lots of love Bas-Lamb Love Mark xx WELCOME BACK CYNTHIA Got, please be my mistress love from an absolute bastard. TOM JE VEUX recomm an absoluse destarc.

NITH LOTS OF love from Nicol to Sooty Norsh and Smudge-as the very best for 1998+. WITH LOVE FROM a bestoer to his io my Princ WICKED HUSSY- BEAR loves you all his muches. Blue sides:
WS.BMZT THANKS FOR the best
year of my life marry me. Gargeous girl.
WHATEVER IT TAKES lapped saxcohonist willingly wears double

ophonist willingly wears double sash for sush loving chef, WEAR YOUR HEART on your sleeve...a. Variety Ctub Gold Heart. WHEN FM WITH you like is never a TOM IT'S NOT that this good since Micky Thomas accord against Liverpool to win the title in 1889 lots of love Emily you.

TOM , ROSES ARE rad, your Play Stations, white ists see if we can make level one tonight. Love and kisses Emmos.

TRYFAM SORMEO AND Elan. Hell and high water but still together.

TO MY BEAUTIFILL wife Alison, I am so heppy to have se the samy and exciting focus of my life. There is no more lovely a liedy to grow old with! Truly in love, Philbox. P.S. The footile is on homorous. bors, on holiday we were chased by hippo's, elephants and more, but I still can't wait till our next trip in May, even though you'll erms me 24 hours a day.

YRRAB BBOC I will be your pusher, love from your Nº1 fan YlleK xxx

OU ARE MY debris who taught plaget and will always be the skools for me. YOU FILL UP My senses 7.7.77 9.00pm.
YOU WON'T BELIEVE & you'll say "It's not true!" Dawn it way, to say "I love you" way, to say 1 now you've found me, your raskyrooder's holding on tight - weyhea! YVONNE LET THE 14th be the start of something special in our hearts love Aldo, passwee pen-YOU ONLY WANTED a gesture today. Happy valentines day, Lynne ryonne LET THE 14th be the start

of something special in our hearts. Love Aldo Plvd and Pen-guin.



ZOE, FOLLOW YOU, follow tree, love, your Nell. 30,000 FT UP I stir my coffee and SUMULTI OF I SET my coffee and think of you, move? acceptant?
ZEB MAKE THE airth move a phew more times have charge.
188 4 188
MARION, AS USUAL better late than never, I'll have a cheese sendwich, all my love Allen rox

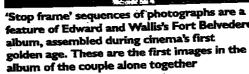
ON VIDEO, NOW.

The King's favourite: Mrs Simpson 1000













Wallis's loving slave buckled her shoes and painted her toenails

Newly discovered photograph albums, whose contents are published here for the first time, give an intimate picture of Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson's life at the time of his succession as king. It was a period, writes Paul Vallely, when their unconventional, if affectionate, relationship was the talk of high society

ma, Viscountess Furness, decided to travel to New York to ner. Often he kept them up until see friends. A few days before 4am. At first, a stoical Mr Simpshe sailed she invited her friend son, whose business was in the American socialite Wallis

"Oh Thelma, the little man is going to be so lonely." Wallis had said. The "little man" was

EDWARD'S **PRIVATE** SOUVENIR 1934-36

The private pain of the Abdication: Three pages of pictures in The Independent on Sunday tomorrow

Edward, Prince of Wales. Lady Furness was the latest in his line of mistresses.

"Well, dear, said Lady Furness, "you look after him while I'm away". She did. Indeed, as Thelma acidly observed in her memoirs, she "looked after him exceedingly well."

Until that point there had been nothing improper about Mrs Simpson's relationship with the future King Edward VIII, so nice," one titled Chelsea the man who was later to become for her sake the first monarch in British history willingly to abdicate. She and her second husband Ernest, an American-born shipping broker, had met Lady Furuess through a friend at the US embassy four years before. Through her they had come to know the Prince of Wales and in 1932 had become regular, if infrequent, weekend visitors at his country home, Fort Belvedere. By 1933 the Simpsons were regarded by the staff at the Fort as regulars. In return, they often invited him to their daily cocktail parties at their apartment in Bryanston Court behind Marble Arch.

But when his mistress was in New York, Edward began calling in at Bryanston regularly and lingering so long past the cock-

It was early in 1934 that Thel- tail hour that he was invited impromptu to join them for a trouble and who had brought Simpson for lunch at the Ritz. work home with him, sat and smiled. But as the royal visits became more frequent he began to excuse himself and return to his study leaving his wife and the prince alone into the small hours. "Ernest has cried off a few," Wallis wrote on 12 February 1934 to her Aunt Bessie in the US, "but I have had to go on. I am sure the gossip will now be that I am the latest [of the prince's mistresses]". Yet she always insisted that no affair

took place. At the Fort during weekend parties it was noticed that Edward danced more and more frequently with his American friend. "But I always have Ernest hanging round my neck, so all is safe," said Wallis.

Thelma Furness did not agree. She had lingered for two months in New York where she had seen much of the rakish young Prince Aly Khan - and when she returned and Edward invited her to the Fort she found her lover polite but very distant. Then at dinner she noticed that the Prince and Wallis seemed to have developed little private jokes. When she saw Wallis playfully slapping the Prince's hand when he picked up a piece of salad with

his fingers the penny dropped. The viscountess was not invited again. It was the talk of the town. "Our little Prince is not lady said. "His treatment of Thelma and Freda [Dudley Ward, a previous mistress] is appalling. Just overnight - bang! No letter, no nothing. Just silence." But Wallis suddenly found herself in receipt of invitations from all directions by people who hoped that she would come - and bring the

Prince of Wales with her. By now the Simpsons were expected every weekend at the fort, and every week they had to assume that several evenings would be spent in the prince's company. What Ernest thought of it all is not recorded. Wallis told Aunt Bessie in one letter Bryanston with a Cairn terrier under that Ernest was flattered by the bis arm - for her. They named him Slipprince's attention. It seems he Simpson who planned the we reprint today from the second of stead. She did and it took the older

1901. Deaths: Dalle Chickens, 2573. Feet 1550m sy

menus and rearranged the furniture. While the prince and his friends played golf, Wallis walked the prince's pugs, Cora and Jaggs. So touched was he by her affection for his dogs that one afternoon he turned up at

per, and he became an important sym-

Edward's private albums which have woman no time to realise that the been passed to The Independent by a family friend who was given the collection by Wallis, then Duchess of Windsor, in 1972 when Edward died in exile in France.

In the summer of 1934 Edward invited the Simpsons to join him in Biarritz. But Ernest was to be away on had little option. At Fort bol of their relationship; the dog is business and so the prince suggested Belvedere it was now Wallis much in evidence in the photographs she should bring her Aunt Bessie in-

prince was in love with her niece. She could see it, she told Wallis, "in his every glance". When Wallis replied that she was in control of the situation, her Earl Winfield Spencer, her first maraunt warned, "I can see no happy outcome to such a situation."

Her niece did not want to hear. Her stuff of fairy tales for a woman such wedlock and brought up as the fa-timental businessman Ernest Simpson,

moved in Baltimore social circles and married an American naval aviator. to be a moody, violent alcoholic who of England. used to go out for the evening leaving relationship with the Prince was the her tied to the bed. After five years of unhappiness she divorced him. The as Wallis, who had been born out of next year she married the safe and sen-

therless poor relation of two distin- with whom she moved to London. She guished American families. Though she was not young - she was 35 when she met Edward - and she was not pretty. Nor was she rich, well-educated, clever or witty. And yet she had become riage was unhappy. Spencer turned out the favourite of the heir to the throne

> Many have assumed that the attraction was sexual. Some historians have claimed that when her first husband was posted to gunboat patrol duty in the South China Seas, Wallis joined



Tea on the terrace at Fort Belvedere: From the early stages of her love affair with Edward, Wallis Simpson took the role of a dominant mother to his supplicant son

SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY 1998 المكذا عن ألاحل

moves to the heart of Edward's life















By the time of Edward's succession, Wallis Simpson, one of the most elegantly dre women of her time, was the hostess at Fort Belvedere, on the edge of Windsor Great Park, where they kept a playful photographic record which includes chats on the doorstep, their dog Slipper playing with a frog, and an impish image of the prince in Garter breeches



The swimming pool Edward built at Fort Belvedere was at the centre of his and Wallis's growing domesticity

him in Hong Kong, where he took her to one of the colony's singing houses, a high-class brothel in Repulse Bay. It was there, and later in Shanghai, it was said that the future Duchess of Windsor learnt the sexual skills, including the celebrated "Singapore Grip" in which contemporary gossips said she was expert. In later years, as Duchess of Windsor, she re-

had been no sexual relationship at this point, though the evidence from Edward's butler was that his bed was often unslept in from the end of 1934 when Mrs Simpson was staying.

Be that as it may, it was clear to their contemporaries that the relationship between Edward and Wallis fed something deeper in his personality than his re-

tresses had. It was no adult love affair of an ordinary sort. "It was overwhelmingly a mother-son relationship," according to Michael Bloch, editor of The Letters Of Edward And Wallis (1931-1937). "His letters to her are infantile, adoring, trusting; they plead for affection and protection. Hers to him are sensible, affectionate, admonishing,

a fond but wise parent and a boarding school."

The role-playing that Edward found exciting made him. in the words of the diarist Chips Channon, Mrs Simpson's abshoes and begged for cigarettes what I call a respectable whore, my old man - it must be so bor- prince wrote the first of many lis's lover was proclaimed King.

the letters exchanged between vant once entered the room to Baldwin. Wallis punished his find Edward on all fours, paint- smallest misdeed like a schoollonely, hypersensitive child at ing Wallis's toenails. Edward mistress, literally rapping his course he is". When she was pretended to pay her for her knuckles or rebuking him kindnesses in cash and jewels, even bestowing upon her ward's golfing partner Sandy. Queen Alexandra's emeralds Bertrand recalled how the which had been destined for his Duchess often said: "Sandy, solute slave. He buckled her future Queen. ("If she were you are so kind to play golf with the end of 1934, when the

peatedly asserted that there peatedly asserted that the peatedly asserted that there peatedly asserted that the peatedly as a peatedly sharply. In their later years Ed-

don't think he's bored," she would snap something like "Of hard on him, Bertrand recalled, "he seemed to feel that it showed that she cared".

Whatever the truth about the relationship it was clear that by

love with Mrs Simpson. He knew it was different from his previous relationships and before long he knew that he wanted to marry her. It was not, of course, something he knew how to discuss with his father. Before he could work out how to do



EDITOR: ROSIE BOYCOTT DEPUTY EDITOR: CHRIS BLACKHURST ADDRESS: I CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF. **LONDON E14 5DL** TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000 FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171-345 2435

The Australians have done it: why can't we? Not become a republic, which they have not, yet, despite yesterday's big step in that direction. But why can we not have a grown-up debate about how we ought to be governed, in the way that they have? Why can we not have an intelligent debate about, for example, why the hereditary principle is wrong when it comes to choosing members of the House of Lords but right for selecting a head of state?

The Constitutional Convention in Canberra voted yesterday by 73 votes to 57 that Australia should cut its umbilical cord - its constitutional link with the Queen. The decision, which is likely to be ratified by a referendum next year, will set off a wave of revision throughout the Commonwealth which surely cannot stop until it has washed through and over the Palaces of Westminster and Buckingham.

Once a British statesman talked about calling in the New World to redress the imbalances of the Old. In the Eighties the Australian courts did just that in the Spycatcher affair, forcing even Thatcherite Britain to regret the excesses of executive power. Here is another chance for Oz radicalism to shame us into the modernisation of our Parliament

and the prerogatives of the Crown. Last year, thanks to Labour's rapid delivery of election promises, the Scots and Welsh tasted the fruit of direct decision-making about their constitutional future; Londoners have their day in May; all of us, sooner or later, will need to assent - or not - to British participation in European monetary union. Those decisions, all of them important, do not exhaust the agenda of change. Conventional wisdom says people are uninterested in constitutional change. But listen to the way people talk about the Royal Family, let alone the House of Lords, and about the relevance of politics to their daily lives. It is nonsense to say the British are essentially wedded to what was.

Since the death of the Princess of Wales there has been an intermittent conversation about royalty and its rights. Tony Blair has counselled the Oueen and her heir about their behaviour - with the clear implication that unless they become more user-friendly that rumbling mood of discontent so palpable in the week after Diana's death might turn nasty.

One result is the new-found willingness of the Queen's household to open its books to public inspection. And yet few fundamentals have changed. It is not just the continuing penchant of the



Prince of Wales and his mistress for engaging in a sport detested by large numbers of his subjects. It is the way that word - subjects - has not been challenged and subverted. The monarch remains the signer of our laws, at the apex of a sys-

tem of pre-democratic government. What the Australian experience

underlines, however, is that the debate starts to be both more difficult and more fruitful when alternatives to a monarch are considered. Support for a republic dropped sharply in the Canberra Convention, while remaining a substantial majority, once it was forced to choose between a constitutional monarchy and the most popular system for choosing a president. The idea that will be put to the Australian people in the referendum is that the president should be appointed by agreement between the prime minister and the leader of the opposition, and approved by parliament. This has offended the democratic purists who think the holder of the post should be directly elected. But it is not a bad idea. As Andreas Whittam Smith argued in these pages last week, it is only when you are forced to think through the alternatives that they can really be judged.

And in our situation, which is quite different from Australia's colonial past and Asian future, there are positive features to a hereditary monarchy. The answer to the objection that it is inconsistent with abolishing the rights of hereditary peers to speak and vote in the Upper House is that they perform dif-ferent functions. The hereditary principle should be taken out of lawmaking; it has, however, a kind of legitimacy when it comes to choosing a symbolic and unifying figurehead

But that means reforming our monarchy, being clear about what it should and should not do. The last vestiges of royal prerogative should be abolished. The monarch should not have the power to choose who shall be prime minister when the party balance in the House of Commons is uncertain. The paraphernalia of castles and palaces and country houses and titles should be trimmed or justified, and the same goes for the taxpayers' subvention. On the other hand, the Royal Family should use its prestige to promote the values and causes which bring us together as a nation, much as Diana tried to do. There is a balance to be struck between the Royal Family preserving its dignity and showing that it is in touch with the lives of its fellow citizens.

Monarchists tend to mock such attempts to modernise the rather recently invented pageantry of royalty by saying that we would not want a bicycling monarchy like that of the Netherlands, would we? Well, we would, actually. The message to the Queen that the Australians should give us the courage to deliver, in the politest possible way, is: on

LETTERS

Save the arts

I am writing to support your campaign for the arts and in particular your call to make it simpler for individuals to set donations to charities against

This government has the admirable ambition of reversing decades of centralising state power and giving some power back to the people. Its intention not to raise the burden of taxation is consistent with that ambition. So how to finance the growth of the arts? The Government is in part urging museums and galleries to become more enterprising and to raise more money themselves.

The Academy is alone among major arts institutions in not receiving a penny of state money, and so we have experience on which to draw. The Academy charges for entry; it was first in the field to get major spousorship from corporations and one of the first to set up membership schemes for friends and for corporations. We have done all the things others are now gearing up to do. And still there is a gap between all this income and our expenditure.

erating surplus for 1997 of £175,000 after a deficit the previous year of £1.4m, and a good part of the reason was a scheme for individual giving, the Exhibition Patrons Group, for individuals giving over £5,000 each. We are just about to widen this scheme to individuals giving a minimum of £1,000. But, my, the complications of ensuring that we do not risk the wrath of two sets of tax authorities.

Customs rules mean that any benefit, worth even £1. would make an entire donation of £1,000 subject to VAT. The donation would then be worth

these rules is huge. This year the Inland Revenue ruled that we must refuse payment for Friends' membership by deed of covenant and had to withdraw tax reclaims of £178,000; the same value as our operat-

People who give usually like to get something back, and it is difficult to explain that a benefit cannot be promised, and the institution can be left looking mean or stupid. The incentive of a simplified tax break will encourage more individuals to give more money. DAVID GORDON Secretary

Royal Academy of Arts London WI

The Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) welcomes The Independent's campaign to save the arts. In particular we were interested to read your suggested changes in taxation policy. The MGC has already made a submission to the tax authorities, responding to the in all small-scale donors going towns on the outskirts of the

We have just reported an op-

only £850 to us.

The Inland Revenue do allow some benefits to be offered before a donation ceases to be taxeffective, but there are different rules for covenants and gift aid. Rules on the latter are particularly crazy because a donor can only receive benefits up to 2.5 per cent of the gift subject to an absolute ceiling of £250; try explaining to a donor giving £1m that the gift is tax-ineffective.

The financial impact of

London SW1 Your campaign for US-style tax incentives on donations to the arts could lead to a loss of income to Oxfam of £3.5m a year, the cost of our development programme throughout central Africa.

taxation, and called for a num-

stronger tax breaks for the arts

relief on donations to all mu-

seums and galleries. All dona-

tions to the arts, however small,

we want simpler and fairer

rules on so-called "benefits"

rules. We also believe that ma-

give assets, such as paintings, in-

stead of cash, and obtain relief.

made several recommenda-

tions to reduce the VAT burden

currently experienced by the

museum sector. We are now

waiting for the Government to

publish its consultation docu-

ment on the charity tax review

before making further repre-

sentation on this issue.

VANESSA HARRIS

Head of Finance and

Museums & Galleries

Administration

Commission

In addition the MGC has

ber of reforms.

Tax-efficient giving is a great incentive to donors. Oxfam is one of many charities which currently derives much of its voluntary income from large numbers of people covenanting valuable but small monthly Under current arrangements the tax benefit is claimed by the charity. It seems unlikely that the proposed system will result

Sunt. 1901: Death's Dimit Chipman. 2571. New 15000 Syngoger (1901)

to the trouble of completing Chancellor's review of charity self-assessment tax forms to reclaim tiny rebates perhaps as lit-

Fighter for the arts: the statue outside the Royal Academy in London of its first president, Sir Joshua Reynolds

Our response calls for even tle as £7.17 per year. While we understand and and heritage. We want to see tax funding of the arts, confining seums registered with the these tax changes to arts organisations could significantly skew MGC, not just charitable mucurrent patterns of charitable giving by diverting money from volshould qualify for tax relief and untary organisations which are also facing similar funding pressures. In theory, we might in time from donations, to avoid indibe able to increase income from wealthy donors, already using vidual and corporate donors beself-assessment, to compensate ing discouraged from making for any loss we would suffer, but donations by inappropriate tax this is completely untried. Othjor donors should be able to er charities will face similar challenges, and could see their

incomes affected over time. These proposals raise complex issues which require extensive and careful consideration across the voluntary sector. They should not be rushed through in a Budget now only weeks away. DAVID NUSSBAUM Financial Director Oxfam

Strike on Iraq

Oxford

As an agency devoted to justice, peace and development the Catholic Institute for International Relations deplores the present escalation towards mil-

itary action against Iraq. Our development programmes in the region are still dealing with the damaging effects of the war in the Gulf in 1991. For its neutral stance at that time Yemen, the poorest country in the Middle East, suffered severe economic deprivation, which greatly affected its capacity to develop. Up to one million migrant Yemeni workamounts often as little as £2. ers in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf were expelled from their places of work. Many of the long-term migrants were homeless, and destitute and set up shanty

coastal city, Hodeidah, stretching already under-resourced health and social services beyand their limited capacity. The remittances from migrant worksympathise with the crisis in the ers, a mainstay of household economy, were lost, pushing many into poverty. Much western aid was cut off, and has yet

to be fully reinstated. If the bombing of Iraq goes ahead the implications for development in the region are severe. The human cost and the infrastructural damage could be immense. The standing of Britain and of UK-based development agencies will be greatly damaged.

We urge the British government to listen to the countries in the region, to listen to their European allies, and to the peace and development agencies here, to use its "special relations" with the US to persuade them to look seriously for negotiated solutions to the present crisis. DENIS HAWES Catholic Institute for

London N1 Having invoked the authority of the imaginary "international community", the United States will soon unleash its own, very visible, weapons of mass destruction, to punish the Iraqi regime for daring to resist be-

International Relations

ing treated like a colony. In the past, such use of force by a western superpower against a Third World counmy would have been called imperialism; these days it is called peace-keeping. As with the former Yugoslavia, the West now claims the moral authority to interfere with the af-

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and include a daytime telephone number.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.

"mad" or "evil", where the West is always the good guy, trying to enforce "sanity" and "order" on belligerent and

sequence of Ian Beale's at-

tempts to have himself elected.

The exclusion of Sinn Fein from

the Stormont talks on the basis

of two disputed killings, when for

weeks the RUC had evidence of

of nearly half a dozen national-

ists before the Ulster Democ-

ratic Party was even considered

for exclusion, will appear to

the majority of the nationalist

community as unjust and as a

flimsy pretext for the exclusion

of many of their political aspi-

This will raise the question

of whether the SDLP supports

this exclusion and place it in the

position of either having to do

so or move closer to Sinn

Fein's position. Do the two gov-

ernments want to hand Sinn

Fein electoral success against

Lords and Commons

Your leader of 12th February

seemed to be saying: "The

House of Lords does not work

in theory, but it is disturbingly

effective in practice. The House

of Commons works in theory,

but does not work in practice.

We therefore recommend that

the House of Lords should be

perverse. Would it not be bet-

ter to see the reform of the

House of Lords in the context

of the whole of Parliament, es-

pecially of the relationship be-

government intends to remove

hereditary peers' right to sit. I

hope you will encourage Mr

Blair only to do so if he sub-

stitutes for them an alternative

that is at least as independent.

Meanwhile, it is clear that

tween the two Houses?

This reasoning seems to be

reformed urgently."

the SDLP on a platter?

J P MURPHY

Birmineham

rations from the process.

PAUL SWEETMAN

Sinn Fein victory?

Southampton

childish nations. I care little for Saddam. But my thoughts will be with the Iragi people. **JJCHARLESWORTH**

London N16

Personality mayors

London-based journalists such as David Walker see elected mayors as a way forward for cities because they judge the success of local government only by the example of London("Elected Mayors could give personality to local government", 11 February).

The real issue is that there is no London-wide government. In cities like Birmingham, however, the City Council is able to take strategic decisions to secure the future wealth and well-being of the city, while at the same time devolving power to local level for truly local issues. Personality politics is at-

tractive to the media because it provides personality copy. Local government is not showbusiness but the business of governance and ensuring the provision of services that have a massive impact on people's day-to-day lives. THERESA STEWART Leader of the Council Birmingham City Council

The answer to David Walker's question "When was the last

fairs of those regimes it deems last couple of months as a con-

time you heard a reference to council affairs in Albert Square or The Street?" is: yesterday! "The council" has featured heavily in Eastenders over the Modern prayer

Like much media treatment of church affairs, your article "Synod changes the Lord's Prayer" (12 February) suffered from presenting the issue solely as a contest between traditionalists and modernisers.

A modern version of the Lord's Prayer has been in use in the Church of England for over 20 years, and the principle that modern and traditional versions should exist side by side is widely accepted.

A less tractable question is the wording of the modern version, particularly the clause traditionally rendered "Lead us not into temptation". The choice for the new millennium is between adopting the new, ecumenically agreed version "Save us from the time of trial", and further experimentation to find a bet-

ter rendering. Christian unity, the Church of England would be right to fall into line with the ecumenical text. it should do so in full awareness that "Save us from the time of trial" is superior to the traditional version neither as a rendering of the biblical text nor (arguably) in terms of intelligibility to presentday churchgoers.

Dr GRAHAM GOULD Department of Theology and Religious Studies King's College London

I like the new version of the Lord's Prayer, except for the retention of the archaic word "hallowed", which is meaningless in modern English. MARK STUBBS Luton, Bedfordshire

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Leader of the Opposition UDA involvement in the killing House of Lords

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

As for the present House, I

hope it will continue to exercise

its independent judgement in

monitoring the great power of

this government without being

intimidated by threats of reform

or abolition. You, however

grudgingly, I am glad to find, ad-

mit we are not doing a bad job.

Viscount CRANBORNE

Death of marriage I enjoyed Glenda Cooper's piece on marriage "fixers" (10 February). It reminded me of the very intimidating lady who organised a cousin's wedding in New York some years ago. She described herself proudly as a "nuptician". "As in mortician?" I asked somewhat incredulously. "Yeah, I guess so," without even a hint of a smile. JOHN SCOTT MONCRIEFF

Edinburgh

Advice from Blair

Congratulations on your leader (11 February), asking Mr Blair to act reasonably over the Murdoch issue. What worries me, however, is Mr Blair's behaviour in general. Who does he think he is, going round, doling out advice to all and sundry: teenagers in Sheffield, Mr Clinton, Mr Yeltsin, Saddam Hussein? He's even personally curing the Millennium bug! Whether he's overworking or simply conceited isn't clear. JEREMY FOX Norwich

QUOTE UNQUOTE

In truth, there is nothing remotely funny when our Deputy Prime Minister has a bucket of water thrown over him in a grubby little stunt perpetrated by a grubby little lout - Ann Widdecombe, Tory MP

I have never seen such a tidy sleeper as Peter Mandelson. His hands were neatly placed on his thighs. His mouth was closed, his hair remained immaculate -

Linda McDougall, wife of Lobour the MP Austin Mitchell, after witnessing the Minister without Portfolio slumbering on a train It's better to send middle-aged men abroad to bore each other than send young men abroad to kill each other - Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary

I am incredibly good at tailoring. If a woman wants to get rid of her bust and hips, I can do it - Antony Price.

Left-handed women are more likely to win qualifications. to be elected to public office and to take part in public speaking. They even reach puberty 15 months earlier than right-handed women - Bob Worcester, MORI chairman

Every now and then you gotta do one for art - Peter Falk, actor, who plays the TV detective 'Columbo', after being signed up to star in a new Arthur Miller play

لكذا من ألاصل

• We must act. The threat posed by Saddam's arsenal is terrifying and real



ROBIN COOK WHY THE WEST IS TALKING TOUGH

The Independent, in a critical front page leader column and articles by Robert Fisk and Patrick Cockburn, on Thursday. challenged the Government to explain its position on Iraq, I would like to accept that challenge.

There is nothing fuzzy about the threat that Saddam Hussein poses. Nor are the biological and chemical weapons he has developed the invention of comic book writers. They are real. Terrifyingly real, Ask his own people.

It was why the United Nations, as part of the Gulf War ceasefire, insisted on his allowing UN weapons inspectors into Iraq. Saddam agreed to allow them free access both to destroy his weapons of mass destruction and his capability to develop more in the future, as he is obliged to do under Security Council resolutions.

We will hold him to this because the reality is far worse than was known when the Gulf War ended. Despite almost daily Iraqi obstruction and deceit, Unscom - the UN weapon inspectors - have uncovered 38,000 chemical weapons, 480,000 litres of live chemical weapon agents, 30 chemical weapon warheads, 48 operational missiles and six missile launchers.

Iraq claimed, until faced with the evidence in 1995, that it never had a biological weapon programme at all. But Unscom

has discovered a massive plant dedicated to producing anthrax and botulinum toxin. Unscom found 19,000 litres of botulinum toxin. Victims die of paralysis within a week. They found 8,400 litres of anthrax, Four out of five people infected die within a few days. They drown in their own body fluid. A kilogram of anthrax released in a city

could kill tens of thousands of people. But Unscom believes there is much mare still to be found and destroyed. They have evidence that Saddam still has thousands of tonnes of chemical weapons hidden. They believe he still has the capacity to manufacture quickly tonnes of biological weapons. And they know that all missiles and warheads are still not accounted for.

No one can doubt he is prepared to use them because he has done in the past against both his own people and his neighbours, as Robert Fisk has so graphically described. His regime is based on brutality. His human rights record is horrific. He is kept in power solely by force. And he has shown he is ready to use that same force against neighbouring countries.

We can't simply sit back and do nothing to stop him increasing his stockpile of weapons and the means to deliver them. Doing nothing is not an option.

But we are not trying to humiliate Saddam. We are not seeking more control over Iraq. All we are demanding is that he gives Unscom the guaranteed right of access and inspection that he agreed in 1991.

Unscom must have the unfettered access necessary to enable it do its job. That includes access to Saddam's presidential palaces. They are not just lavish homes built at the expense of the suffering of his own people. They are huge military compounds - one of which is 25 square kilometres in size - which contain weapons and documents that Unscom must be able to at the UN to expand the oil-for-food pro-

the threat of force.

We are not in the business of risking lives for fuzzy symbolism or posture. We are not Hooking for conflict, let alone do we want to launch a military adventure. We are making every diplomatic effort to reach a solution. We have been for weeks. And we continue to work flat out with our partners to achieve this.

We are also in the lead in trying to help the Iraqi people. We are driving discussions gramme. Britain is the second largest

We are not in the business of risking lives for fuzzy symbolism or posture. We are not looking for conflict, nor do we want to launch a military adventure.

One-off inspections are not enough. Unscom knows from bitter experience that it is only repeat visits which have enabled them to uncover Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. So Iraq's latest compromise does not meet the terms of the UN resolution. It does show that Saddam can be moved. But only if diplomacy is backed by

donor of humanitarian aid to Iraq. But it is not the UN which is starving Iraqis. It is Saddam Hussein. There are no sanctions on importing food or medicine. Saddam simply prefers to spend the money he earns from exports of oil on his palaces and rebuilding his military machine.

But the history of our dealings with Sad- The writer is the Foreign Secretary.

dam show that diplomacy alone will not pull him back from the brink. And in the end, it may require force itself to make him comply with international law. The aim of any military action would be to diminish Saddam's military capabilities, including his ability to deploy, conceal and recreate his weapons of mass destruction capability or threaten his neighbours.

Saddam should not confuse our reluctance to use force with our determination to do so if necessary. The risks are too great to turn a blind eye, no matter how comfortable that option may seem.

The stability of the entire region is at risk. As Tony Blair has made clear, we have a clear duty in the interests of long-term peace to stop Saddam defying the world community. He can not be allowed to continue to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

There is increasing recognition in the international community of the importance of making Saddam comply with the Secu-rity Council resolution. If force is needed to ensure Saddam does not have weapons of mass destruction, more and more countries accept that Saddam must take full responsibility. But the power to lift this threat lies in his own hands.

"When you consider John Prescott's encounter with Chumbawumba, the Sixties look oh so good



TREVOR **PHILLIPS** ON THE DAYS OF SUMMER

The obituary writers worked overtime this week; but I fear that they have spent the greater part of their labours on a figure unworthy of their effort. As my good friend and sometime TV mentor Brian Walden has reminded us, heroics are in the eye of the beholder. His evaluation of Nelson Mandela was, to say the least, controversial. ing capacity for rebuttal I hesitate to differ with him in public; I've seen him destroy too many in debate to enter into a dispute with him lightly. However in the case of Nelson Mandela, I might just enter a doubt. For my own money, he got the facts right, but missed the point. It doesn't matter much whether Mr Mandela has succeeded as a politician; that isn't his value. It would be like evaluating Mother Teresa as a failure on the grounds that she didn't do much for the science of disease control. These people are models and inspirations to the rest of us; that is

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their purpose. So pouring cold water over them does little to dim their lustre; dare I say it, it may only make the pourer look as though he has missed the temper of the people. When Danbert Nobacon

approached the Deputy Prime

Minister at the Brits this week, I doubt whether he had the sort of elegantly worked critique of the Labour government as Walden did of Mr Mandela. If he did, we didn't hear it. But he did have the same outcome in mind - to pour cold water over a People's Champion who, he thought, had betrayed the People. But Prescott is still thought of as the conscience of the Labour High Command; so it looks odd for a supposedly politically aware anarchist to pick him for the ice bucket treatment. He is the one person thought both inclined to and capable of keeping Labour to its historic well-off against the will of the devious Blairite spinmeisters, New Labour Rich (including millionaire pop stars). It doesn't seem frightfully bright. I think that Chumbawumba should stick to music, at which they are brilliant - "Tubthumping" should be the England World Cup anthem. The words are prophetic:

I get knocked down Then I get up again You're never gonna keep me down ...

But stars should avoid the choosing of heroes; it is a complex business. What we can all agree is that great heroes embody the spirit of their times and in some way demonstrate



mission of helping the less Surf's up: the Beach Boys helped set the optimistic tone of the Sixties

Photograph: Michael Ochs/Redferns

the best of which their era is capable. But who are they? Two contenders for greatness passed away this week; the commentators dwelt on one and ignored the other. They were wrong.

The passing of Enoch Powell unleashed acres of apologias for the great Tory opportunist; we heard that he was a brilliant scholar, about his fine oratory, about his intellectual rigour. We heard far less about the vulgar populism that inspired his most famous remarks, or about the coldly calculating way in which he rewrote that speech with the specific objective of encouraging a minority of thugs and racists, who then went out to do

precisely what he could have predicted with his fine professorial mind: to-intimidate as many black and Asian families as they could find. The defence that he was the only one courageous enough to raise the issue of racial conflict is fatuous. His speech was made in an attempt to break the hard-won consensus for race relations legislation which had been arrived at only after four years of debate. His legacy is wholly ugly and malign. And of course, he was wrong in his central proposition that black, or multiracial Britons could never truly belong to the nation: from Mr Paul Boating and Baroness Flather

in the Palace of Westminster. across to Trevor McDonald, Ian Wright and Scary Spice, it would be hard to avoid the accepted presence of New Britons. There was a poignant irony that Mr Powell's own passing was reported to the nation, on TV by two black pre-

Yet relatively little effort has been expended on analysing the impact of a far more significant figure who died this week, Carl Wilson of the Beach Boys. It will no doubt seem absurd to set a mere singer alongside the Great Intellect; but if there is a sound of the Sixties for me,

it is closer to the sweet harmonies and teenage lyrics of the Wilson brothers, than the adenoidal grating of Powell's rhetoric. And it is this decade that even now forms the cultural substratum for leadership around the world; why does anyone imagine that Clinton and Blair are so close, but for their common cultural inheritance? Even John Prescott, possibly the least likely member of the present government to be thought of as a reconstituted hippy, really only turned up at the Brit Awards because

It is reported that, even in his wet suit, he stuck around purely for the pleasure of going backstage to meet the band, who, aside from the fact that Mick Fleetwood had left his hair at home, could easily have . been back in the mid-Seventies.

The loss of Carl Wilson, from cancer at just 51 marks the end of a kind of summer. For 36 years, the three Wilson brothers, with their cousin Mike Love and their fried Al Jardine have toured the world carrying the sound of sunny skies and foaming surf with them. Even now people talk of the optimism of the Sixties; nothing expressed it better than the close harmonies of "Good Vibrations" and "Wouldn't It Be Nice" the songs on which Carl led. Few others could have got away with lyrics as apparently banal

Patti Page, And summer days on old Cape

Happy times, drinking wine ... reality is not for me.

And it makes me sad, Fantasy worlds and Disney Girls Are coming back ...

Yet even if you didn't know where Cape Cod was, the band conjured up an image of a place in which endless summer was possible; a golden gentle

summer, in which there was nothing to worry about except the surf, the girls/boys and the cars. Of course it wasn't real, but that is not the point of the artist, or of the visionary - it is to point us to a better world. The Beach Boys had their dark side, with alchoholism, Dennis Wilson's death in - of all things, a swimming accident - and Brian Wilson's deep depression. But even this they turned to new possibilites when they became the first of the superbands to plead the cause of the environment in their album Surf's

To people who did not live

through this period, it might seem sentimental to lavish this kind of praise on a bunch of Californian surfers. But their sound was pervasive and imitated by others; it became, for a while the language of pop music. The point is that though they were not seen as a "political" band in the sense that even the Beatles were, they gave a generation a sense of optimism and the feeling that a ter world was there for the taking. That seems to me a marvellous legacy. And set against the crude, vulgar gesture politics we saw at the Brits, it Icels as though the summer's nearly over. Today's popular culture, all hard-edged cynicism, points to a cold-hearted future.

Get out of the way. That woman boxer's really mad – she's got PMT



GLENDA COOPER LAME EXCUSES OF OUR TIME

There are only 685 days to the Millennium. We are in the last days of the 20th century, which has seen more advances than any other age, particularly in the area of gender equality. But in case women fall victim to complacency, remember the British Board of Boxing Control.

In an ongoing industrial tribunal hearing to determine whether Jane Couch, the British-born welterweight champion known as the Fleetwood Assassin, has suffered sex discrimination, the BBBC came up with a peculiarly novel explanation for

denying her a licence to fight in her

own country: PMT Advisers called by the BBBC made clear to the tribunal in Croydon, south London, that women and pugilism just don't go together because the poor dears' menstrual cycle gets them all silly and upset. If they boxed while premenstrual - for goodness sake - they might hurt themselves. As opposed to any other time of the month?

A letter from the board read out at the tribunal made clear this was true: "Unfortunately many women suffer from PMT when they are more prone to accidents, they are more emotional and more labile (unstable), which makes them more prone to injury."

One really has to conclude that this men's enclave, the BBBC, doesn't know too much about women. As far as I can see, premenstrual women would make far better boxers than women on an even keel who might realise how stupid this sport is.

Naked aggression, the desire to hit anything that gets in your way, the singleminded conviction that life is unfair and everyone is going to pay sounds like a recipe for success in the boxing world to me. You don't like the way your opponent's looking at your hair? Wham! Your partner is a low-down dog with the social niceties of a caveman? Bam! You don't really know what's bothering you but the world's a terrible place and it all seems to be going wrong for you? Kapow! The referee is holding up your hand and you have won the match. It's all so simple. Instead of studying the form ardent gamblers would be making 28-day calculations and promoters would be furiously arguing about the dates of matches. Still as Dinah Rose, the lawyer

representing Jane Couch, pointed out, this is not the first time that men have come up with unusual excuses to justify why women shouldn't do things. "It is like when they told women that they couldn't run marathons because their wombs would fail out," she said. Another finding that has been seized upon by men is that women's brains shrink during pregnancy. Dr Anita Holdcroft hit the beadlines a year ago as the scientist who had proved what the man in the pub already knew pregnant women really were a few cans short of a six-pack. Dr Holdcroft's paper said the brains of pregnant women appeared to shrink during late pregnancy, which offered an explanation for cognitive problems some women complain of before and after giving birth. The newspapers rejoiced. "Health warning: having a baby can shrink your brain", one headlined screamed. "Just as we thought. Pregnant women do lose their minds" proclaimed another. Curiously, a

study says that age shrinks men's brains faster than women's. However that study, which proves that advancing age does indeed make men smaller-minded, has not been widely followed up. Maybe the memory loss had already set in ...

Other things women have been banned from doing over the years include voting women were bound to be pacifists and the Empire needed manly and macho governments. Playing football was also frowned on - breasts would get in the way. And as for becoming a nightclub bouncer well Jackie Winn in Bristol was told she should think about being a barmaid instead.

Only two years ago in a parliamentary debate on equal opportunities Hansard records that Sir Anthony Grant said, "I am wholly and absolutely in favour of equal opportunities. Women often do a much better job than men, except in rugby, but in virtually everything else they do an extremely good job ... I hope I do not live to see the day when the English ladies' 15 beats the English or Scottish men's 15." Don't we all?

To be honest anyone who decides to box needs their head examined. But if the BBBC is going to suggest that women become emotionally unstable and vulnerable during periods then I'll buy it. Just don't expect me to go near a cooker. I might hurt myself on the nasty hot hob. Or indeed damage myself with a sharp fruit knife due to my increased chance of being prone to injury. Maybe [1]] just stay away from the weekly shop at the supermarket in case I become emotionally unstable with the till girl. I'll stay on the sofa, watch television and let men do dangerous things like looking after children. PMT? I'll bave it all mouth thank you very much.



Dominique de Menil

DOMINIQUE and Jean de Arts with an excellent collection. Rice University, Houston, ex- Pompidou in Paris, and said she Menil were a young couple As board members, building panded Rice's art department. with a growing family when they moved to Houston in 1941. They had spent much of the early war years apart, Jean in Romania, sabotaging rail deliveries to Nazi forces, Dominique with the children at the family home in the South of France.

Houston to establish Schlumberger (his wife's family firm) as an overseas company, independent of Vichy France. Over the next few decades, they were to amass one of the great private art collections in the world - some 15,000 pieces spanning 4,000 years. Meanwhile, they had become equally interested in the ecumenical movement and the cause of human rights around the world. Dominique was the daugh-

ter of Conrad Schlumberger, the French inventor who, with the financial backing of his father and in partnership with his brother Marcel, had spent more and philosophy. Approached by than 20 years perfecting the electronic logging device that would transform oil exploration around the world, and gradually build the enormous family fortune. The Schlumbergers had no

interest in art. They were scientists and inventors. Dominique was brought up in Paris and took graduate and postgraduate degrees in mathematics and physics at the Sorbonne. She met her husband, Baron Jean de Menil, a banker, at a party in Versailles; he joined Schlumberger a few years after their marriage in 1931.

In New York in the early 1940s, the de Menils met the Dominican Father Marie-Alain Couturier, who had brought the art of Matisse, Leger and Rouault into chapels in France. He became their guide and mentor. On one occasion they paid \$2,000 for a Cézanne watercolour and Dominique's mother was appalled "Father. they will have to eat crumbs at this rate." "Better to eat crumbs than to live without art," was Couturier's reply.

The de Menils became insatiable. They borrowed money to buy art and they campaigned to bring art into the lives of others. They had found in Houston a small Museum of Fine

the collections and the profes- and created a media centre, sional staff, they urged that ex- drawing in distinguished film dihibits be advertised on city buses and billboards.

tive in the new Contemporary of the Black in Western Art". It Art Museum, set up by young Jean de Menil had come to enthusiasts (it had cost \$5,000 to build). The two young amateur curators travelled by train to bring back treasured paintings on loan. They included the many millions at auction). The de Menils gave Max Ernst his first exhibition outside a commercial gallery. They built a naturalisation in 1962, Jean became John.

> in 1954, they established the non-profit Menil Foundation to foster knowledge and understanding in art, architecture the new Catholic University of St Thomas, they commissioned Philip Johnson to design the master plan for the campus, and went on to found an outstandits chairman.

> The university gained a rephibitions. When McAgy died suddenly in 1964, Dominique de Menil took over. She became known for the imaginative and dramatic installation of her exhibitions - for example "Rhyme and Reason", paintings from the Menil Collection in 1986 at the Grand Palais in Paris.

In 1969 the de Menils founded the Institute of the Arts at



De Menil: insatiable

rectors like Roberto Rossellini to teach. Beginning modestly in In 1951, as volunteers, they 1960 they launched what becurated a Van Gogh retrospec- . came a major study of "Image resulted in a massive international archive and a four-volume publication by the Menil Foun-

dation and Harvard University.

Devout Catholics, the de Menils founded the octagonal famous Portrait of Dr Gachet Rothko Chapel in Houston to (which, in the 1980s, fetched be an ecumenical chapel open to all. It opened in 1971. It was dedicated to meditation and peace, and is decorated with 14 large dark panels by the abstract large collection of the works of artist Mark Rothko. There Do-Ernst and René Magritte. With minique de Menil called together leaders of world religious for week-long colloquia. The Dalai Lama came. In 1978 and again in 1994 the Whirling Dervishes performed their graceful, haunting rites. Typically, in 1979 Dominique de Menil went to Turkey to visit them in their homes.

She became ever more vividaware in her wide travels of atrocities across the world, and ing art department. They of the courage of those who brought in Jermayne McAgy as countered them; in response she established the biannual Rothko Chapel Awards of \$10,000 to utation for the artistry of its ex- each of five recipients for their commitment to truth and freedom. She also founded the Oscar Romero Award of \$20,000, named after the El Salvador bishop assassinated at the altar in 1980. In 1986, with President Jimmy Carter, she established the Carter-Menil Human Rights Prize of \$100,000, awarded in Houston or Atlanta on alternate years. Archbishop Desmond Tutu gave the keynote address in 1986 and Nelson Mandela spoke at the presentation in 1994 when he was given a special £100,000 prize. In 1984 a Carter-Menil award went to the Institute of Applied Science in Oslo

> With John de Menil's death in 1973, Dominique de Menil began alone the task of building a museum to house their still growing collection. She chose as 23 March 1908; married 1931

for its efforts to bring peace

between Israel and the PLO.

wanted it to look small on the outside and big on the inside. It does. It opened in 1986 and has received consistent critical acclaim for its simplicity. Built with contributions from other Houston foundations including the Brown, Cullen and Hobby Foundations, the Menil Collection is open free to the public from Wednesday to Sunday.

Later the de Menils commissioned Piano to design a gallery for their art works by Cy Twombly. Twombly then added his own collection to the gallery's.

The Menil Collection is in the heart of what has become known as Meniland, a neighbourhood of 3.2 acres of land given over to 1920s and 1930s one-storey bungalows, which they bought in the 1960s and painted grey with white trim. Some bungalows are used for office space. The rest are rented, some to long-time residents, some to those who want to be a part of the art world. The Menil Collection stands comfortably amid them at one end, the Rothko Chapel at the other.

Dominique de Menil's last building project was the Byzantine Fresco Chapel. Originally painted in a small chapel on Cyprus, these exquisite frescoes had been hacked into portable hunks by vandals who later sold them. The Menil Foundation rescued them and had them restored on behalf of the Greek Orthodox Church, They are now sheltered in a small, exquisite chapel designed by the de Menils' son François.

Over the decades, as their private collection became well known throughout the art world, the de Menils were courted by the major museums of Europe and America, anxious as to where their collection might end up. But, Dominique de Menil reasoned, they had made their lives and their fortune in Houston - the centre of the oil industry. Therefore, the treasures must remain in Houston.

Marguerite Johnston

Dominique Schlumberger, arts potron and philanthropist: born Paris architect Renzo Piano, who Baron Jean de Menil (died 1973; with Richard Rogers had de- two sons, three doughters); died signed the Centre Georges. Houston, Texas 31 December 1997. | rapidly made Decca a major. Dreams" (1963) - whom Bradley

The 'Nashville sound': Bradley, right, with k.d. lang, with whom he collaborated on Shadowland (1988)

Owen Bradley

THAT Nashville is the universally acknowledged centre of the country music industry is largely the legacy of one man: Owen Bradley. A former bandleader and sometime session pianist, he went on to become one of the architects of the famed "Nashville sound" and was responsi-Avenue South, an area now known as "Music Row", into the hub of the industry.

A native Tennessean, Bradley began his musical career in several 1930s dance bands, including that of Ted Weems, of popular approach to country. "Out of the Night" fame, He developed his skills as a bandleader and arranger and by 1940 was music director for the Nashville radio station WSM, home of the Grand Ole Opry. His work gave him a unique relationship with the show's stars and when the Decca Records executive Paul Cohen was looking for a right-hand man in

Nashville, he chose Bradley. With Cohen based in New York, it was left to Bradley to

player in post-war country music. Among the acts he produced were Red Foley, Kitty Wells, Ernest Tubb, Webb Pierce, Brenda Lee, the Wilburn Brothers. Loretta Lynn and, for three 1956 sessions, Buddy Holly.

Although Bradley worked with rock 'n' rollers like Holly ble for developing the city's 16th and Gene Vincent, he was among those wary of the detrimental impact of the new music on the country market. Their response was the so-called "Nashville sound", a slick, accessible and phenomenally

Bradley's arranging experience proved useful, although he was as guilty of periodic heavy-handedness as were the sound's two other principal architects: RCA's guitarist-turnedproducer Chet Atkins and Don Law of Columbia. At its worst the Nashville sound was soupy and emetic, but at its best it could be stunning; reaching its apotheosis in the work of Patsy Cline - particularly "I Fall to Pieces", "Crazy" (both 1961), "She's adopt a hands-on role and he Got You" (1962) and "Sweet

had produced since her earliest days with Four-Star Records. Through Bradley's advoca-

cy of Decca's "Faith" series (known as the 14000 line), acts like Tubb, Foley and Jimmie Davis in the early 1950s made gospel recordings at a time when such projects were rare. Bradley's first studio had

been in rooms rented from the

Teamsters trade union. An unexpected rent rise, however, led him to develop an alternative site on 16th Avenue which included the Quonset Hut studio. This action ruled out Decca's mooted move of its operation to Dallas and thus secured for Nashville its future status as Music City, USA. The Hut was later sold to Columbia but. by that stage, Bradley and his session guitarist brother Harold had developed their Bradley Barn studio complex 20 miles to the east at Mount Juliet. The Barn became a noted centre of production and Loretta Lynn. Conway Twitty, Jack Greene, Marty Robbins and Jerty Wallace were among those who

direction. It burnt down in October 1980, but was later rebuilt. Having been promoted to

A & R director in 1958 and vicepresident in 1968, Bradley's career with Decca/MCA lasted into the 1970s, after which he worked on a freelance basis, Later projects included a two-album set with Kitty Wells for Step One Records in 1989 and k.d. lang's acclaimed Shadowland (1988). Bradley also worked as music director on the Hollywood movies, Coal Miner's Daughter (1980) and Sweet Dreams (1985), biopics of, respectively, Loretta Lynn and Patsy Cline.

A quiet and modest man, in 1974 Owen Bradley rightly received Country Music's highest honour, election to its Hall of Fame. His son, Jerry, is also a record producer.

Paul Wadey

Owen Bradley, musician, producer and record company executive: born Westmoreland, Tennessee 21 October 1915; married 1935 Mary Katherine Franklin (one son, one daughter); died Nashville, recorded there under Bradley's Tennessee 7 January 1998.

John Pinkerton

LEO: the incredible story of the world's first business computer, was published in New York. The book celebrates Leo, a computer built by the British catering company of J. Lyons, and the most romantic of all the pioneer computing machines. John Pinkerton was chief engineer of Leo. and his career tracked the rise and turbulent progress of the British computer industry.

Pinkerton was educated at King Edward VI School, Bath, and Clifton College, Bristol. In 1937 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read Natural Sciences, graduating in 1940. His war years were spent on radar research. At the end of the war he returned to Cam-

LAST month a 400-page book, bridge, as a research student in ployed many hundreds of acthe Cavendish Laboratory.

In the immediate post-war years computers were in the air. especially at Cambridge University, where the director of the mathematical laboratory, Maua computer known as the Edsac. Pinkerton - who knew Wilkes from wartime radar research - took not much more than a passing interest in computers until he learnt of Lyons' computer developments.

The catering firm of J. Lyons was a national institution, famed for its high-street teashops and bakery goods. In the business world it was also famed for its streamlined offices, which em-

counts clerks to deal with the sales of millions of cups of tea

and countless cakes each day. Lyons' interest in computers dated from 1947, when two of its senior office managers made rice Wilkes, was at the very fore- an American tour to see what front of development, building was new in the office world. They came back convinced that the way of the future would be computers, and set out to buy one. However, it would be five or more years before machines became commercially available, so they decided to build their own. Contact was established with Wilkes at Cambridge, who agreed to let Lyons make a copy of the Edsac computer. Lyons also needed a chief engineer to

rection; he never looked back. standard industry practice. A natural engineer, Pinkerton's philosophy was not to change anything in the Edsac's design which he did not fully understand; he later remarked, "Since we didn't understand very well why it was designed, we didn't make very many changes at all," In fact, Pinkerton made several key innovations, the most important of which was reliability. The 6,000-valve Leo was to function at the heart of an operational business and had to be available day in, day out, with no significant breakdowns. The techniques Pinkerton developed, such as the "marginal testing" of components that were build the machine, and Wilkes about to fail, was classic engi-

pointed Pinkerton in their di- neering work that became onset of American competi- firm, ICL in 1968. The next 20

Leo became operational in early 1951, and gradually took over more and more of Lyons' office routine. By 1954, it was used to capacity, and it was decided to build a second machine. Word of Leo had spread wide in the business community and several other firms, such as the Ford Motor Company, had expressed interest in having a machine too. So, in 1955 Lyons decided to go into the computer business and created a subsidiary. Leo Computers Ltd. Pinkerton became technical director of the new firm, and oversaw the development of Leo's successors, Leo II and Leo III. major British player to form a By the early 1960s, with the

tion and the need to develop transistorised computers, the costs of staying in the computer business had begun to soar.

> ing was good, and sold out to English Electric. Pinkerton was appointed head of research in English Electric Computers, but more reorganisation lay ahead. In the mid-1960s, Harold Wilson's Labour government was determined to rescue British industry in general and the computer industry in particular. Bullied by the Ministry of Technology, English Electric Computers merged with the other

Lyons made the sad but inevit-

able decision to quit while the go-

years were times of great volatility for ICL, as its senior managers constantly did battle to keep the company competitive against IBM and the American giants. For the remainder of his career until he retired in 1984, Pinkerton's principal role was as a product strategist, advising on how ICL's computers should anticipate and evolve with the ever

more rapid shifts in technology. After his retirement, Pinkerton was an independent consultant until his sudden death. He was editor of a series of professional computer books, and was editor of ICL's respected research journal. He was a liveryman of the Guild "national champion" computer of Information Technologists, ter); died London 22 December 1997.



Pinkerton: a natural

and worked hard for its apprenticeship scheme.

Martin Campbell-Kelly

John Maurice McClean Pinkerton, computer engineer: born London 2 August 1919; married 1948 Helen McCorkindale (one son, one daugh-

BIRTHS, **MARRIAGES** & DEATHS

DEATHS

YUDKIN: Cicely (Cis), died peaceful-by at home on 13 February, Crema-tion at Golders Green Crematorium, Hoop Lane, on Monday 16 February, 3.30pm, No flowers please. Domations to Macmillan Cancer Relief, 15 Britten Street, SW3 3TZ.

MEMORIAL SERVICES HORDERe Mervyn, Mozan's Requiem, Saturday 14 March, 2pat, St Augus-tine's, Kilburn Park Road, Maida Vale.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anxiversaries, in Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, I Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, relephoned to 0171-293 2012 (24-hour answering machine 977-293 2011) or fixed to 9177-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Prince Edward attends the opening of the new Real Tennis Court at the Bristol and Bath Tennis Club, Clifton, Bristol.

Changing of the Guard TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horsa Guards, Hum; No 7 Cold-stream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Bucklogham Palace, 11,30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards. TO-MORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

Birthdays ·

TODAY: Prince Hans Adam II of Liechtenstein, 53: The Right Rev Michael Ball, former Bishop of Truro, 66: The Right Rev Peter Ball, former Bishop of Gloucester, 66; Mr John Butterfill MP, 57; Sir John Clark, former Chairman and Chief Executive, the Plessey Co. 72; Professor Evelyn Ebsworth, Vice-Chancellor, Durham University, 65; Sir Arnold Elton, consultant surgeon, 78; Sir Jack Hibbert, former director, Central Statistical Office, 66; Sir Derrick Holden-Brown, former Chairman, Allied-Lyons, 75; Mr Kevin Keegan, footballer, 47; Mr Christopher Lillicrap, actor and mu-sician, 49; Mr John MacGregor MP, 61; Miss Manuela Maleeva, tennis player, 31; Miss Lois Manwell, actress, 11; Caretter Mountaines of Recommendation 74; Lord Newby, 45; The Hou Hanning Philipps, former Lord Lieu-tenant of Dyfed, 94; Mr Michael Rudman, theatre director and producer, 59: Dr Sir Albert Slow former Vice-Chancellor, Essex University. 77; Sir Jocelyn Stevens, Chairman, English Heritage, 66; Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, chairman, Scottish Hydro-Electric, 63; Mrs Margaret Wright, former Chief Commissioner, the Guide Association, 56. TOMORROW: Mr John Adams, composer, 51; Mr Clive Aslet, Editor, Country Life, 43; Sir Nicholas Bayne, former High Commissioner

to Canada, 61; Sir Harold Beeley, for-

mer ambassador, 89; Sir William

Bentley, Chairman, Society of Pen-

sion Consultants, 71; Miss Claire Bloom, actress, 67; Mr Dan Cromp-

ton, former Chief Constable, Not-

tinghamshire, 57; Mrs Chloe Davis,

former Chairman, Consumer Af-

fairs Group of National Organisa-

tions, 89; Sir Maurice Drake, former

High Court Judge, 75; Mr Frank Dunlop, former Director, Edinburgh

Festival, 71; Mr Paul Ferris, author

Regiment areads 17

and journalist, 69; Mr John Green-way MP, 52; Mr Gerald Harper, actor, 69; Miss Diana Jones, jockey, 48; Professor Andrew Miller, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Stirling Uni-versity, 62 Mr Charles Needham, forversity, 62; Mr Charles Needham, for-mer chairman, Coalite, 74; Sir Richard O'Brien, former Chairman Manpower Services Commission, 78; Sir William Reid, former Ombudsman, 67; Miss Jane Seymour, actress, 47; Miss Clare Short MP, Secretary of State for International Development, 52; Mr Peter Squire, former Headmaster, Bedford Mod-em School, 61; Sir Adrian Swire, honorary president, John Swire & Sons Ltd, 66; Sir Alan Ward, a Lord

Justice of Appeal, 60. Anniversaries TODAY: Births: Thomas Robert Malthus, economist, 1766. Deaths: Sir Pelham Granville (P.G.) Wodehouse, 1975. On this day: the Aya-tollah Khomeini pronounced a death sentence on the author Salman Rushdie, 1989. Today is St Valen tine's Day and the Feast Day of St Abraham of Carrhae, St Adolf of Osnabruck, St Antoninus of Sorrento St Amentius, St Conran, Saints Cvril and Methodius, St John Baptist of the Conception and St Maro. TO-MORROW: Births: Jeremy Bentham, philosopher and writer, 1748. Deaths: Herbert Henry, Earl of Oxford and Asquith, statesman, 1928. On this day: Britain changed over to decimal currency, 1971. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Agape of Terni, St Sigfrid of Vario, St Tanco or Tatto and St Walfrid or Galfrid.

John Allenby

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of John Allenby CBE will take place on Thursday 12 March at 12 noon at the Church of All Saints. Crondall. Farnham, Surrey. All are welcome.

FAITH & REASON

Lifelong fidelity: the source of this madness is in God

Is St Valentine's Day a saint's day or just a pagan hangover, an ancient festival of courtship? asks Margaret Atkins. Is there a distinctively Christian ideal of love?

It may all be a great mistake: it may be the wrong St Valentine. When the poet Chaucer told of the birds choosing their mates on St Valentine's Day, he described not mid-February, but

And for the new and blissful summer's sake Upon the branches full of blossoms soft, In their delight they turned themselves full oft, And sang, "Oh blessed be St Valentine, For on this day I choose you to be mine!

Chaucer, it appears, knew of a different St Valentine, whose feast was in early May. Could it be that the spring frolics of his poems were later attached, in error, to the other St Valentine's Day, in February?

That would make sense. What could be more natural than to celebrate courtship in May, when scented blossoms hang from the bough, when the hedgerows echo with birdsong, when

countryside? May, in most of Europe, looks like nature's own festival of fertility. Surely it is no coincidence that the pagan Romans commemorated Flora, the goddess of flowers, at this time. The roots of St Valentine's Day could be

older than Christianity itself. Historians tell us to be wary when we look for an unbroken link between modern and ancient festivities. The more history we discover, the more we learn how festivals are born and die, adapt and alter, to fit local needs and changing times. The point is important; but still ... Surely here, if anywhere, in the fusion of human love with the first thrill of summer, we might be allowed to detect an ancient impulse

quickening our modern veins. Has Christianity, then, made any difference? Is the celebration of courtship simply a pagan thing, or is there a distinctively Christian ideal of love? We might look to fidelity: "for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part", as the marriage vows out it. But there is nothing exclusively Christian here. Think of Penelope, who spent 20 loyal years awaiting the return of her husband, Odysseus, from the Trojan

War, warding off the advances of

balmy evenings beckon lovers into the her many suitors. And even today many a starry-eyed Valentine dreams, however naïvely, of lifelong love.

Is there not a kind of insanity in this? It is all very well to declare everlasting love on a summer's evening; but, in the face of countless broken marriages and shattered dreams, how can anyone, in cold blood, dare such a thing? Romanticism is all very well; but it seems to have little to do with reality.

And yet - perhaps there is realism also in the romantic's dream. It is becoming ever clearer that divorce inflicts lasting damage on spouses, on children and on society at large, despite the honourable struggles of so many parents to soften the blow. The dream, in so far as it can be lived, protects us all. in concrete and ordinary ways.

"It is only Christian men / guard even heathen things." G.K. Chesterton once wrote. Chesterton always valued those good things which are shared by all human beings, of any faith or of none, things such as courage and laughter and poetry. These, he argued, although not specifically Christian, are most securely sustained within the framework

There is indeed a kind of madness about lifelong fidelity. But Christians, like Jews, find the source of this mad-

ness in God. God's steadfast love for his faithless people, Israel, was like a man's love for his adulterous wife; St Paul compared marriage to the love of Christ for his Church. Here, perhaps is the key to how Christianity might "guard heathen things". For Christ's love was above all a love that healed by forgiveness. In the bruised world of our everyday relationships, only forgiveness can heal; only forgiveness can restore and sustain fidelity. That is why the tidy, clinical, model of serial monogamy - a clean break with the wife, then marry the mistress - is not the Christian way. Divine forgiveness. by contrast, is thoroughly entangled in the messy reality of ordinary living.

1

As for February's St Valentine, we are sure of only one thing: that he was a martyr. Today's feast belongs to a man who was faithful to Christ even unto death. Perhaps, after all, he is an appropriate patron for lovers. In order to cherish our youthful dreams, we need the loyalty of a martyr no less than the laughter of May. It is as well that God, as the saying goes, writes straight with crooked lines. Out of our confused customs, the Church can rescue a feast that makes sense. And out of our broken attempts at faithful loving, a God-given forgiveness can bring healing and hope.

كانا عن ألاط

Small fry start to challenge the blue chips

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

There are signs, still faint, that trading in the shares of small-neering side would represent higher price. An Israeli comsecond and third liners are er companies. shaking off their inferiority gap which has opened with blue chips.

In a week when Footsie tended to dilly and dally the cap advance. supporting mideap and smallcap indices have achieved

They were in form yester-29.8 points gain to 5,5823, nearly 50 below the high hit last week.

One of the most astonishing aspects of the current bull run is the way blue chips have other to stage a modest outperformed their smaller rivals. They opened a yawning gap which the smaller fry is unlikely to close in the foreseeable future.

Overseas investors are un-

Incheape, the internationdevastated first by the strength of the yen and then the Asian crisis, led the mid-

The shares rose 10p to 161p in moderate trading. They have, of course, a long way to go before they recapday as Footsie managed a ture their earlier glory. Last year they topped 300p and in in favour, largely due to the Inchcape's halcyon days were storming Lloyds TSB profits riding above 600p.

Coats Vivella, the struggling textile group, was anrecovery. The shares managed to struggle off their low point, climbing 4p to 86.5p. CV has opted for a demerger. It intends to split itself into two stand alone companies. willing to venture beyond the Viyella and Jaeger together Footsie constituents and even with the home-furnishing domestic institutions much business will be bundled to- 40 per cent to 7.5p. An agency

the other package.

The dismal share price complex and narrowing the al trading group which was stems from its poor trading performance. The group took the gloss off the demerger announcement by producing a profit warning.

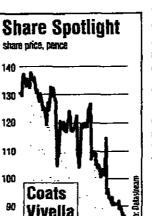
In 1996 it achieved £94.4m; around £40m is expected for last year and a dividend cut is on the cards.

Financial shares were back performance. Lloyds gained 38p to 837p after touching 890p. Barclays and Woolwich, both reporting next week, improved 30p to 1,886p and 5.5p to 369p respectively.

Schroders rose 75p to 2,000 and Legal & General, the insurance group, 16p to

SEA MultiMedia suffered the day's biggest fall, sliding pany SEA came to the mar- shares topped 70p. ket at around 70p in 1996.

Microvitec, a technology group, fell almost as much as to 7.75p after the group said it would have to self its displays division because it was "experiencing financial difficulties". The sale could pull in up



Merrydown, the cider and English wine company, was another in a distressed state. SEA. The shares slumped 5p After it was known the take over talks with unidentified parties had fallen through the shares lost 7p to 47.5p.

المكذا عن ألاصل

Still, Tadpole Technology continued its remarkable progress, hitting 34.25p, up 7.75p. Since the stockbroker Colin Blackbourn acquired 3.1 per cent at around 10p a share there has been a surge of speculative buying with many T-25 deals arranged.
Tadpole, heavily loss-making, profits of £1.5m next year. is rumoured to have a big contract up its corporate sleeve. It will have to be a remarkable deal to justify the present price. Three years alysis falled to produce much

ago the shares topped 400p. Futures Integrated Telephony jumped 18p to 95.5p af-ter disclosing it had received

group, recently picked up 3.2 per cent and then a 4.27 per cent interest, said to be hostile to Mr Hemani, was built

through a nominee company. ISA International put on 2.5p to 110p after buying a stationery wholesaler for £29m; shares are being issued for the

deal at 137p.

Alphameric, the IT group, fell 8p to 38p. It produced a profit warning which prompted forecasts of around £2m to be lowered to no more than break even for the year ending next month. Butterfield Secu-

A telephone conference between hard pressed Biocompatibles International and leading investors and anenthusiasm and the shares fell 3.5p to 149.5p. They were 1,420p last year.

Dares Estates improved 4p

TAKING STOCK

LPA Industries, an electrical equipment group, added 2.5p to 64.5p as stockbroker Greig Middictor described the company as "one to watch". The analyst David Wilkinson sees profits climbing from £557,000 to £900,000 this year and to £1.16m in the following year. LPA makes rail and aircraft electrical connectors. It has taken over Channel Holdings, another electrical connector business for £2.1m in cash and shares. GM say LPA has the muscle to make further acquisitions.

Total Systems, the IT group which has climbed from 30p since the Spring largely on the back of hopes of an MMT Computing bid fell 14.5p to 117.5p. Reason: MMT has sharply reduced its shareholding and now has only 2.6 per cent.

BNB Resources, a recruitment and training group, has risen 14p to 180p this week. The shares

source: Bloomberg www.bloomberg.com/ak

	domestic institutions much prefer to concentrate on blue chips because of the difficul- ties they often experience in	gether as one group; the in-	cross of 900,000 shares at	80 MAMJJASONDJE	ter disclosing it had received a bid approach. Amin He- mani, who runs the Reading- based Westcoast computer	to 20.5 as a 6.2 million share overhang was placed with three institutions at 19p.	to 180p this week. The shares still look cheap in relation to other recruitment specialists.
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Lloyds TSB set for acquisitions as bank reveals record profits

By Andrew Yates

Lloyds TSB, already one of the biggest banking groups in the world, yesterday said it was looking for more multi-billion pound acquisitions to add to its growing empire.

Its shares leapt more than 4 per cent to 873p as the group announced a 30 per cent rise in its dividend and record profits of £3.2bn in 1997, a rise of more than a quarter from the previous year.

However the bank faces a threat of strike action from BIFU, the finance union which represent three quarters of its staff, over impending mass job cuts and a new wage structure.

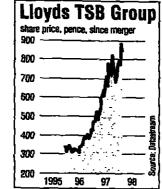
BIFU, the finance union, predicted that 10,000 jobs would be lost and more than 650 branches would close as Lloyds integrates its banking network with TSB. The union also believes that the bank's new wage deal will leave a fifth of the bank's staff without a pay rise this year.

Lloyds TSB has closed 153 bank branches last year with the loss of 3,300 staff. Overall the company cut 4.426 jobs during 1997. The bank is determined to continue its huge cost cutting program to fight off the threat of growing competition from anybody from supermarket chains to Richard Branson's Virgin group who have set up their own low cost banking op-

Lloyds TSB indicated it had billions at its disposal to launch a major acquisition. Sir Brian Pit-

"We are rapidly building up excess capital which we would prefer to use to make an acquisition. We are generating more than £1bn in surplus funds. There are lots of opportunities coming up over the next few

Lloyds TSB indicated that any purchase was likely to be within the UK financial services sector. Chief executive Peter EIIwood said: "We have already



looked at a number of companies, including a number of insurance companies."

The bank said yesterday that is was unlikely to launch a share buy back or give money back to shareholders until it has exhausted its acquisition possibilities. That is likely to be at least 18 months away.

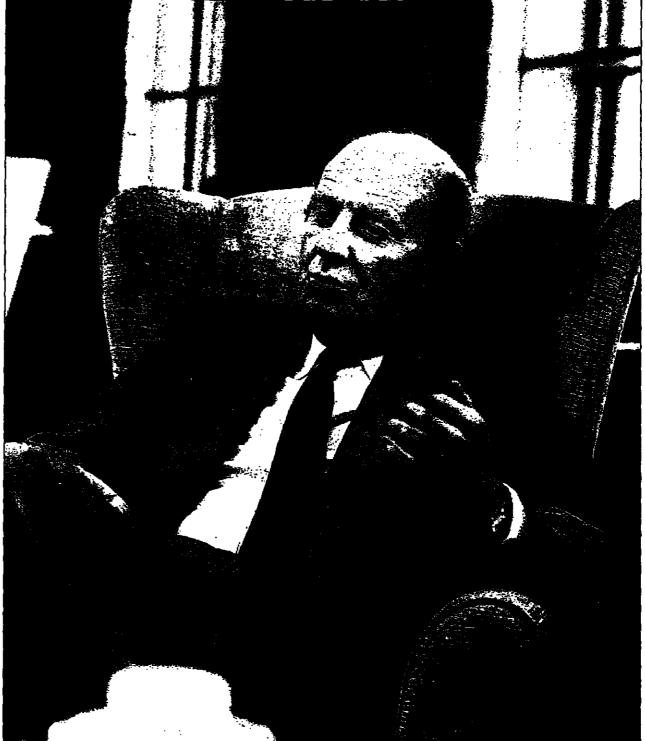
Mr Ellwood admitted that the entrance of the supermarkets into the banking market was a real threat. "I use the example of petrol. Within a few years the supermarket gained a 25 per cent share of the petrol market. man, the group's chairman said: At the moment are lending fig-

ures have gone up. However in the long term, banking margins will come under pressure. That it why we have to remain competitive and cut costs."

The group has already cut costs by £220m since tying up its £15bn merger with TSB. It plans to slash at least another £180m of costs over the next two years by integrating the two branch networks. The merger has been sanctioned by the House of Lords, but is still being considered by the House of Commons, a process likely to take several months. However the bill is understood to face opposition from several Tory MP's, including Alan Clark. A TSB Hill Samuel action group has been formed amid concerns that TSB will have to surrender a £1bn pension surplus to Lloyds.

If the cost cutting is allowed to proceed it would lead to a swathe of high street closures around the country amongst the groups 2,600 branch network. The group is also considering rebranding all its sites with the Lloyds-TSB name. Lloyds TSB kicked off the

banking results season in style, with its retail banking profits rising 16 per cent to £832m and mortgage earnings up a third to £693m. However the growth in the number of people taking out mortgages at the bank has slowed in recent months. Mr Eliwood admitted that intense price competition from building societies who have decided to retain their mutual status and give customers cheaper deals has contributed to sales falling away.



Outlook, page 25 Sir Brian Pitman: 'We are generating more than £1 bn in surplus funds. There are lots of opportunities coming'

Argos chief vows to fend off £1.6bn **GUS** hostile bid

By Nigel Cope City Correspondent

The new acting chief executive of Argos came out fighting yesterday, promising to mount a strong defence against the £1.6bn hostile bid from Great Universal Stores, whose offer document is expected on Monday.

Stuart Rose, who was only appointed earlier this week, said he was confident that Argos could confound its critics and escape GUS's clutches. "This is not a done deal at all. We have the makings here of a very strong fight. I'm up for it and I hope we will enjoy ourselves in the process. This business will not be sold on the cheap."

His comments came as Argos shares drifted 14p lower to 611p compared to the GUS offer price of 570p. The fall was attributed to fading hopes of a white knight intervention and comments from analysts that GUS may not have to raise its bid by much to clinch victory. GUS shares closed 2p higher at 750p.

GUS's offer document is expected to underline the views of Lord Wolfson, the company's chairman, that Argos is facing competition, increased demands for improved service and that GUS can help Argos achieve its home shopping and ambitions

Mr Rose denied that after less than a week in the business, he could hope to offer little

more than a straightforward defence on the grounds of price and the possible return of funds to shareholders. "I have had enough time to get around the business and am very encouraged by what I've seen. This business has had just one difficult year. It is not about to collapse around our ears."

He admitted that the Argos management may have taken its eye off the ball in recent months. "There is a danger that when a business has been as successful as this one has that your eyes are sometimes not as open as they should be."

He said the company would continue with its plans to start a home shopping trial later this year. It is also possible that the company will consider developing a database on the shopping habits of its 14 million customers. "I have an open mind on it." he said.

Although Bob Stewart, Argos' finance director, last week questioned whether a database would be of much use to Argos. Mr Rose is thought to be interested in the possible uses of customer information for crossselling of other products and the more efficient targeting of marketing material. "It would be timely to review our attitude to databases," he said.

GUS's offer document is

1901 Deaths: Utility Chiptons 7577; New Largen Symposise (

likely to focus on the key points made in its original offer announcement and underline the weakness in the Argos share

GEC and Fiat win £500m Virgin tilting train order

By Randeep Ramesh Transport Correspondent

GEC-Alsthorn and Fiat have won Britain's largest ever train order, a £500m contract to supply Virgin with high-speed tilting trains for the West Coast Mainline.

The company beat off Siemens of Germany and Adtranz, the joint venture between ABB of Sweden and Daimler Benz, to claim the order. The 55 trains, each seven carriages long will travel at 140mph on the West Coast service.

The first trains should be in service by 2001. The joint bid made by GEC and Fiat would ingham and Preston. About 70 per cent of the work

would come to the UK, with bogies, tilting mechanisms and body shells sourced from Italy and the remainder of the work, including final assembly, carried out in Britain.

The winning bid is based on Fiat's successful Pendolino tilting train, which has been in service in Italy for several years. Hames Sherwood's Great North Eastern Railways has also ordered two Pendolinos.

ney time from London to Birmingham to one hour while Manchester will be reached in

It is understood that other competitors could not meet the demanding production schedule. "What you had is the start date slipping ever closer to the delivery date," said one rival.

Siemens revealed last month that Virgin had insisted on onerous penalty clauses for late delivery amounting to some 30 per cent of the cost of the order.

franchise is being contested by Adtranz, Bombardier and CAF of Spain. Sources close to the deal say that the order is likely to result in a diesel tilting train fleet and that Adtranz and Bornbardier are the "clear front-

runners". If Richard Branson, the chairman of Virgin, commits his company to the CrossCountry order - for 75 train sets - it would make him the "tilting train tycoon of

Europe". Managers at Virgin have

When the £2.1bn upgrade of Virgin has another large train been attracted by the huge time guarantee up to, 3,500 jobs at the West Coast is finished in 2005. order outstanding. The £250m savings tilting trains would protwists and turns of many of CrossCountry's routes would see significant journey time reduc-

> For example, the trip from Birmingham to Bristol, which can take more than one-and-a-half hours, could be cut by 30

> Tilting trains are expensive. Refurbishing CrossCountry trains would reduce the cost to about £180m and is understood

to be among options submitted | clients have told us they are by the bidders. against it."

KMPG and Ernst call off merger

By Nigel Cope City Correspondent

Ernst & Young and KPMG dramatically called off their \$18bn (£11.25bn) accountancy mega-merger yesterday blaming "increasing difficulties" with the regulatory authorities. In a joint statement issued late yesterday afternoon, the two firms said the regulatory issues, together with the costs and resources required to merge the cultures of the two firms, would have made the proposed merger impracticable."

The break-down of the discussions casts doubt on the other proposed accountancy merger between Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand. However, the two sides said last night that they were still pressing ahead and were in talks with the regulators.

Ind

peg

KPMG and Ernst & Young, whose merger would have created the world's largest professional service firm, said the regulatory process in US, Europe and other major markets would have taken too long, proved too disruptive and incurred considerable costs. It would also have created potential disruption to client service, they said.

Both sides attempted to put a brave face on the collapse of their plans which were announced last October. Colin Sharman, KPMG's international chairman said that whilst he was "disappointed" he had no doubt that KPMG would emerge as "a stronger and more cohesive business." Nick Land, Ernst & Young's senior partner said Ernst & Young looked forward to continued growth both in the UK and internationally.

Accountancy insiders expressed no surprise at the collapse of the merger. Many had little more than spoiling tactics designed to de-rail the PW-Coopers deal which had been announced just three weeks before E&Y made its approach to KPMG.

A spokesman for Deloitte & Touche said: "Deloitte Touche Tomatsu has been opposed to consolidation among the Big Six because it is not in the interests of the profession and more importantly, because our

Merrydown shares slump as takeover talks fail

By Andrew Yates

Shares in Merrydown crashed 7p to an all-time low of 47.5p after the troubled Sussex-based cider maker announced that potential takeover talks had come to nothing. Several rivals are understood to have run a slide rule over the group but decided against a bid, or were not willing to offer a high enough price for the group.

Merrydown is now looking to raise more money from financial backers or through an equity issue. However the group, which is struggling under a debts of £7.5m, denied it needed extra cash urgently to ensure its survival.

Andy Nash, Merrydown's new chairman, said: "We are restricted in what we can do with

our present finances to develop the business. We are in discussions with several parties

about raising extra money." The group plans to use the extra money to put behind its two main brands Merrydown cider and Schloer, the fruit favoured soft drink. "Not enough money has been put behind our brands in the past and we want to increase our marketing and sales effort," said Mr Nash.

The group is also likely to implement more cost cuts. It recently reduced its workforce by more than 10 per cent. However, analysis raised concerns about the group's future. "The fact that the group was unable to attract a bidder says it all," said one City observer.

Merrydown, which produces Two Dogs lemonade, has suffered from a slump in the al copops market which forced it to give up the distribution of the drinks to Scottish & Newcastle.

Merrydown's shares have fallen from a high of 298p in 1993 and the group is now valued at just £5m. Even accounting for bid speculation the shares have underperformed the market by almost 60 per cent over the past 12 months.

Merrydown's problems culminated in Richard Purdey stopping down as the group's chairman after three decades with the group. Merrydown's failure to find a bidder is the latest setback for the troubled cider sector. Profits have also plummeted at Matthew Clark, which makes Diamond White and Dry Blackthorn, as it continues to lose market share.

Tesco beats rival with Norweb deal to plug into the gas market

Business Correspondent

Tesco laid down the gauntlet to British Gas yesterday by becoming the first big supermarket chain to offer discounted gas supplies to its 10 million customers who take part in the

Clubcard discount scheme.

The UK's largest supermarket group has signed a deal with Energi, the domestic fuel brand launched last year by Norweb, United Utilities' electricity arm. Tesco Clubcard customers who register for the scheme before I May will received 1000 bonus points, worth £10, if they sign up to switch from British Gas to Energi.

Mike Brindle, marketing director for Energi, said the scheme would also apply to

electricity customers when the domestic market finally opens to competition from the Autumn. The roll-out of domestic gas competition, which began in 1996, will be completed by 23 May under a controversial accelerated timetable from Ofgas, the industry watchdog.

Energi said Clubcard customers would get savings of up to 20 per cent on their gas bills, worth around £60 off an average £300 household bill. Details of the deal were confidential. aithough Norweb is funding customers' extra Clubcard points earned for every extra pound of their bills. Several independent gas

suppliers are thought to have courted Tesco and the other supermarkets to use their loyalty card databases. Tesco last

TOURIST RATES

year looked closely at forming its own gas business, but is believed to have lost interest after adverse publicity about dubious doorstep sales tactics from other gas suppliers.

Tesco will send out the first Energi offers later this month to Clubcard bolders, though under data protection rules they have to get in touch with the supplier directly to sign up.

Its choice of Norweb as its partner surprised industry experts yesterday, because Norweb has been slower than Scottish-Power or Eastern Group to move into the gas market. However, Norweb said more than 120,000 of its existing electricity customers had signed up to take gas supplies when the market opens to competition on

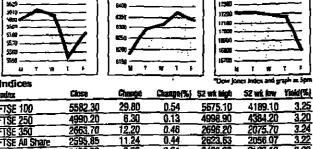
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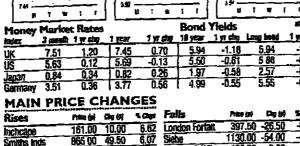
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STOCK MARKETS



INTEREST RATES UK 10 year gift US long bond



CURRENCIES OTHER INDICATORS

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JEREMY WARNER ON THE

COMING CRASH IN BANK SHARES

AND WHY IT PAYS FOR CAZENOVE TO BE LOW PROFILE

when they announce figures, but it's hard to quarrel with or pick holes in those released by Lloyds yesterday. They are stunningly good. There is no other way to describe them. There must be some clouds on the horizon, so what could they be? With plenty of cost cutting still to come from the merger with TSB, prospects for Lloyds are still as good as any. If there are clouds, they are of a more general nature. In declining order I would list them

detract from the other. He was right,

Now all bankers, realising the error of their

ways, sing broadly from the same hymn

sheet. But still Sir Brian manages to whip the

socks off them. Last year he delivered an as-

tonishing 87 per cent return to shareholders,

taking account of share price appreciation and

dividends. For what was already one of

Britain's largest companies, that's going it. Ex-

ecutives generally like to flatter themselves

thus. First, one of the factors driving the bank-

Lloyds TSB may be too good a story to last The story at Lloyds TSB under that old ing sector ever higher is the supposed further warhorse Sir Brian Pitman, just gets better and scope for consolidation. Personally I regard

better. Long before it was fashionable to be this as pie in the sky. so. Sir Brian was a shareholder value obses-There is virtually no chance of regulators sive, for ever focusing on cost to income raagreeing, at least in the foreseeable future, to tios, return on capital and risk management further significant consolidation in UK high systems. While other clearers hared into the street banking. Unlike many Continental more glamourous world of investment bankcountries, with their plethora of regional banks, ing, destroying hundreds of millions of pounds Britain is not overbanked. Actually, we have of shareholder value in the process, Sir Britoo few banks, their market shares are already an stuck to his knitting - the boring old world high enough and their profits are at levels which of financial services. The two cultures would already invite the description of excess. never mix, he insisted and the one would just

Second, new low cost competition is building up as never before. Plainly that hasn't affected the market leaders unduly so far, but however they attempt to defend their position. it seems certain that banking margins will shortly be under severe pressure from new entrants.

The third cloud is a more intangible one. There is a general belief in the stock market that banks have kicked the old boom to bust cycle, that they have learned bow to manage their lending in a manner which should prevent the full calamity of bad debt provisioning that has marked business downturns in the

There are plenty of good reasons for believing this may be true. Better management is one, but if governments genuinely are better at macro economic policy, then the peaks and troughs in the business cycle may be getting less severe anyway. Even so, it's going to take a long time to convince many of us that bad bank lending really is a thing of the past.

There's been too much recent experience of it to think that.

For all these reasons, the bull market in hank shares cannot be expected to last. Don't ask me to predict when it might end, however. As always, that's in the lap of the gods.

Cazenove, the City's oldest remaining independent stock broking partnership, has become so low profile in recent years that it would be casy to believe it might have disappeared altogether. In terms of publicity and wing for the public eye, it is so now far off the radar screen as to be virtually non existent. So what's happened to Cazenove, arguably still, despite its lack of visibility, the most famous name in

At the time of Big Bang more than a decade ago, Cazenove deliberately went against the City herd, which was either merging like topsy in an ultimately fruitless attempt to mimic Wall Street's integrated investment banks, or selling up to Johnnie foreigner and retiring to the country with the labradors.

Instead, Cazenove opted to soldier on as before. Everyone said the partnership would inevitably wither and die, that there could be no place in the modern City for a firm of the old school like Cazenove, with its favour for a favour, socially networked style of operat-

An uncomfortable entanglement with the financial scandal of the decade, the Guinness

affair, only compounded that view. Caz suf-fered the humiliation of being struck off the Government's list of favoured advisers for privatisation. People started to read the last rights. But actually it hasn't worked out that way.

A brief nose round the firm's Tokenhouse Yard premises, just behind the Bank of England, reveals the old firm still in rude health. The fact that you never read about Cazenove anymore is pursued by the firm as deliberate policy. Not for Cazenove the loud swaggering of the modern investment bank. It is for the client to grab the limelight, should be want to do so, not the adviser or broker, is the general approach. It seems to work.

If the truth be known, most of the behemoths of London's investment banking scene have long since given up on that traditional primary purpose of serving the interests of the client above all else. Their proprietary trading operations and wider global strategies make their own interests equally paramount. About the best the client can hope for is that his own interests will coincide with those of the inestment bank. I exaggerate, perhaps, but only

Which may explain why at the last count Cazenove still had more corporate clients in the UK than any other securities house, including the giants of SBC Warburg, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Goldman Sachs, and Dresdner Kleinwort Benson. Even today, there's scarcely a major deal or takeover in the land where Cazenove is not present in some shape

or form. Right now it is involved in both substantial active takeover plays, GUS's bid for Argus, and Glaxo Wellcome's merger with SmithKline Beecham, only you won't see its

name on the press release. Plainly, it must be doing something right. Part of that success is that clients still value the sort of self effacing voice of independence that Caz stands for, perhaps even more so now than in the past. Furthermore, Caz's powers of distribution, its ability to find takers for equity offerings, remain supreme. This is partly a self fullfilling thing. Because of its power as a corporate broker, Cazenove has the choicest of the new issues. As a fund manager, it always used to be said, you had to take your fair share of the dogs in order to receive the

There's less of that now. Rather the reverse. Cazenove famously resigned in protest as broker to the Telegraph a few years back after placing a large block of shares in the company. Shortly thereafter the newspaper cut its cover price and the shares plummeted. Caz was embarrassed enough to resign publicly and won plenty of plaudits in the City for doing so. The writ of the investor seems to run as supreme as that of the corporate

And that was about the last time we heard from Cazenove. Is it a good thing to be so low profile? Contrary to most popular thinking. the lesson seems to be that it certainly doesn't to do any barm.

Indonesian plan to peg rupiah to the dollar 'premature'

Plans by Indonesia to establish a currency board and peg the upiah to the dollar in an effort to bring stability to its troubled economy received a double blow yesterday after the International Fund and the US government said the move was

Michel Camdessus, the IMF managing director, said it was too soon for Indonesia to adopt a currency board. He said that he was of "the strong view" that the time for a pegged currency in Indonesia had not yet come, because "a number of preconditions need to be satisfied". Mr Camdessus pointed to the need for adequate foreign exchange reserves and "more progress in the rehabilitation of the banking system".

Speaking at the Bretton Woods Committee's annual meeting. he said that without the necessary preconditions, there was a chance the currency board would fail, which would hurt the country's prospects for an economic recovery.

"The failure of a currency board would completely under-

By Michael Harrison

GEC yesterday further strength-

ened its war chest by complet-

ing the disposal of its unwanted

UK industrial businesses, with

the sale of GEC Plessey Semi-

conductors to Mitel Corporation

posal proceeds to more than

£300m and increased specula-

The deal lifts GEC's dis-

of Canada for £137m.

mine credibility and policymaking and seriously damage the country's growth prospects." Mr Camdessus said.

Meanwhile, Lawrence Summers, the US Deputy Treasury Secretary, backed the IMF's stance on a proposed currency board, saying there was no "quick fix" to the country's economic problems.

Asked if Washington agreed with the IMF on the issue, Mr Summers told reporters, "I don't have anything to add. The United States is part of the (IMF) executive board."

The remarks come as Indonesia's President Suharto appeared to be pressing ahead with the controversial system as fresh rioting was reported in three Java towns over rising prices.

'i ne argument sets in for a showdown with the IMF that economists warn could scuttle the country's \$40bn (£25bn) aid package.

Even before the tough talking the rupiah had fallen as much as 24 per cent yesterday on concern the opposition to the peg would scuttle the plan. The

tion that it is preparing for a big

acquisition, possibly of a US de-

£1bn from the flotation of a 26

per cent stake in the power

engineering and transport joint

venture GEC Alsthom this

June. It already has £1.1bn of

net cash even after paying out

£300m earlier this year on a

GEC is set to raise a further

fence electronics business.

rupiah fell as low as 9,600 to the US dollar, traders said, from 7,300 yesterday. The fall dragged other south-east Asian currencies lower.

The President last month signed a new agreement with the IMF to push forward with sweeping economic reforms in return for a \$43bn bail-out package orchestrated by the fund. The currency rebounded after a key adviser on the currency plan said Suharto agreed to go head with the proposal in a meeting today. The rupiah traded recently at 8,200.

Separately, Indonesia's central bank governor called on developed countries to do more to help Indonesia, or take the risk of the country's problems spreading beyond Asia.

more reports of riots targeting Chinese shop owners as Indonesians scramble to find food and basic sanitary provisions. Indonesia is confronted with rampant inflation, surging unemployment and an economy that is expected to contract for the first time in almost 30 years.

GPS had sales of £215m and

pre-tax profits of £7.2m in the

vear to 31 March 1997 and

employs about 2,000 staff at fac-

tories in Swindon, Plymouth

In total GEC has now dis-

posed of businesses with com-

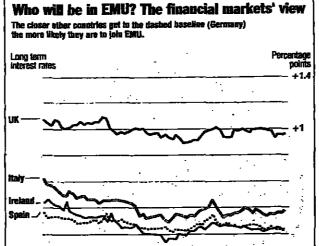
bined sales of £1bn since Lord

Simpson took over as manag-

ing director in September 1996.

Analysts speculated that

and London.



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in 10 years' time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View

The Independent asked analysis from: Nikko Europe, Paine Webber, ABM Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Greefell Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC James Capel, UBS what probability they placed on EMU starting on time.

Probability EMIU starts on time: Probability EMU is delayed: Probability EMU never happens:

GEC could be eyeing up a

strike for Litton Industries of

the US, which is valued at

\$2.8bn, ITT Industries, which

is worth \$3.8bn, or possibly even

TRW which is valued at \$6.6bn.

However, GEC is also consid-

(89% last week) (8% last week) (3% last week)

By Michael Harrison

Airbus Industrie is poised to

land a \$4bn (£2.5bn) order for

100 aircraft from a group of

Opposition fails to shake City's **EMU** prophecy

By Clifford German

The upsurge of popular opposition to European monetary union (EMU) in Germany this week, and the legal challenge being pressed in the constitutional court in Bonn have done nothing to shake the conviction in the City that EMU is past the point of no return. It will go ahead next January and almost certainly with Italy in the front rank as well.

The strength of the opposition was highlighted by a letter to the Financial Times from 155 German economists calling for EMU to be délayed "for a couple of years". Meanwhile, the constitutional court has agreed to indicate before the end of February whether it will bear the legal challenge to replacing the mark with the euro. Even if it accepts the responsibility, it is unlikely to give a ruling before the crucial reports from the European Monetary Institute on 25 March and the reports of the Bundesbank and other central banks which will follow. The reports of the Dutch central bank and the Bundesbank represent the last real possibility of delaying EMU, and Italy is the only candidate which central banks could recommend be excluded.

Barclaycard cuts interest rate on unpaid balances

Barclaycard, the UK's first credit card, yesterday launched a long-awaited counter-attack against cheaper rivals which have been steadily eroding its market share. Cardholders who spend £300 in a month will have the rate of interest charged on unpaid balances reduced from 1.65 per cent a month to 1.515 per cent in the following month, equivalent to cutting 2 per cent a year off the standard annual percentage rate of 22.9 per cent. If they spend £500 the interest goes down to 1.375 per cent the following month, a 4 per cent reduction in the APR. The controversial £10 a year annual fee will also be waived for all customers who spend £5,000 a year on their Barclaycards, or £8,000 a year on a Goldcard.

Arculus takes over at IPC

David Arculus, who announced his resignation from United News & Media on Thursday, yesterday confirmed that he is to take over as chairman of IPC, the magazine group which was bought out by its management last month. Mr Arculus, who was "delighted" to be taking on the part-time job, is expected to follow the rest of the management by taking a stake in IPC. Meanwhile, he is also believed to be preparing to take over as non-executive chairman of Severn Trent, the water company where he is already a non-executive director.

Finelist bids for IPG

Finelist, the acquisitive distribution group, yesterday announced a 150p a share cash offer for Independent Parts, valuing the automotive parts distributor at £38.4m. The offer is a 32 per cent premium to IPG's closing price on Christmas Eve, the last day before it revealed that it was in talks with a potential buyer. The offer has been accepted by major shareholders including Gartland Whalley & Barker, the Aim-listed corporate developer, and IPG's directors, giving Finelist acceptances representing 62.5 per cent of IPG's share

Receivers in at On Demand

On Demand Information, the company that produces and publishes electronic directories and which asked for its trading in its shares to be suspended on 2 February, vesterday said it had called in the receivers. It said that, following consultation with the London Stock Exchange, it had been agreed that the company's suspension of listing should remain in force pending clarification of the company's financial position. .

Grosvenor Inns reshuffle

Grosvenor Inns said yesterday it was on track to more than double the size of its Slug & Lettuce chain to 50 outlets by the new millennium. New sites include Canary Wharf in east London, Harrogate and York. The group is also renaming itself Shig & Lettuce after a wide-scale disposal programme which has seen it sell off most of its other assets. This programme led to a fall in pre-tax profits to £137,000 in the six months to 29 November against £1.1m a year ago. In a management reshuffle, Gary Pettet is stepping up to chief executive and Sheila McKenzie will take his place as managing director. Grosvenor has already identified another 70 new

BT under fire over unfair pricing of mobile phone service

Plessey sale adds £137m to GEC war chest

Business Correspondent

British Telecom yesterday faced two adverse rulings from Don Cruickshank, the telecoms regulator, over unfair pricing of Cellnet mobile services and errors in price lists.

Last night Mr Cruickshank issued the first ever order against Cellnet, the UK's second largest mobile network, which is 60 per cent owned by BT It followed complaints that Cellnet's wholesale tariffs offered to retailers gave bigger airtime service providers unfair discounts.

Though Cellnet approached Oftel, the watchdog, with revised tariffs, Mr Cruickshank said the jury was still out on the packages and ordered the network to

"bring discrimination to a halt." In a separate ruling, BT's competitors were given the legal right to sue the company

yesterday by Oftel, in a dispute over price lists. Mr Cruickshank yesterday issued a final order compelling BT to publish accurate and comprehensive lists of its retail and wholesale prices, after an investigation found "clear breaches" of BT's

Latin American airlines, markering buying out Siemens' 40 ing a further inroad by the per cent stake in the joint tele-European planemaker into an coms venture GPT. area of the world traditionally GEC's shares ended up 3p dominated by its American rival Boeing. The order is the single biggest aircraft purchase placed in Latin America and the sec-

ond largest order won by Airbus. The three airlines involved are the Chilean carrier Lan-Chile, and two airline holding companies, TACA of Central America and TAM of Brazil.

The orders are expected to be signed next month. A Lan-Chile spokeswoman confirmed yesterday that it had signed a letter of intent with Airbus. The deal covers 100 single-aisle short-haul jets from the Airbus A320 family due for delivery from 2000 onwards. In addition the airlines are expected to take options on a further 100 aircraft.

£2.5bn deal set to secure Airbus

entry into Latin American market

Boeing dominates the South American aviation scene with a market share estimated at more than 80 per cent. So the Airbus order, thought to have been won with the promise of substantial discounts, will come as a blow to the Seattle-based group. Last year Airbus secured a \$5bn order from USAirways for 124 aircraft and this month won a \$2.6bn order from Iberia of

Spain, its biggest European deal. Airbus won a record 460 firm orders worth \$29.6bn last year, breaking the previous all-time high of 421 firm sales in 1989.

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1	COMPAN	Y RESUL	TS		
1		Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
f	Grosvesor lines (I)	11.85m (11.82m)	0.137m (1.10m)	0.37p (5.69p)	3.03p (3.03p
-	Lupica Fortalist (F)	2.27bn (1.86bn)	38.48m (37.95m)	29.95p (27.01p)	12.3 (11.2p)
)	Licyds TSB (F)	- (-)	3.16bn (2.51bn)	43.7p (32.1p)	
, I	Total Office Some (F)	\$5.25m (60 01m)	2 34m (2 32m)	R En /1.1 Ons	2.46.14.263

WHO'S SUING **WHO**

JOHN WILLCOCK



BCCI liquidators won the right yesterday to sue Ernst & Young for £1.1bn over the audit of the crashed bank just as Ernst & Young pulled out of merger talks with fellow accountancy giant KPMG, three Law Lords in the Court of Appeal unanimously overturned an order made in January 1997 which struck out claims brought by the liquidators of BCCI, Deloitte & Touche.

Mr Justice Laddie struck out the claims bought on behalf of BCCI (Overseas), a Cayman Islands registered subsidiary, against Ernst & Whinney, a firm which later became Ernst & Young. BCCI was closed by regulators in 1991 after massive long-term frauds were discovered, leaving the bank with debts

of more than \$10 bn. Chris Morris, lead liquidator, said yesterday: "We consider this judgment a very satisfactory result for the creditors of BCCI. We thought that the original Order was mistaken and we are pleased that the position taken by the liquidators has been vindicated."

Nick Land, senior partner at Ernst & Young commented: "I am dissappointed that the Court of Appeal have overturned Mr Justice Laddie's original ruling, but the Court have not found that a duty of care was owed by Ernst & Whinney to BCCI (Overseas) and I am confident that this claim will fail when the facts are fully examined at trial."

licence obligations.

Mr Morris is also suing Price Waterhouse, the auditors to other parts of BCCL. The claims against the two accountancy firms amount to more than £1.8bn.

The liquidators are also suing the Bank of England in its role as co-regulator of BCCL They lost the first round in court, but intend to pursue an appeal in May or June. Mr Morris's lead counsel for the case will be Lord Neill, a former master of Ali Souls College, Oxford, and chairman of the new committee on standards in public life.

Mr Morris is set to make a second payment to BCCI's thousands of creditors this June. The liquidators have already paid out over £1 billion to former customers, and the

next payment could equal that. All told they have raised around £1.8bn, having incurred costs of over £130m in the process, much of that in legal fees.

It's a busy time for insolvency practitioners, despite the bouyant economic conditions in the UK. Yesterday the courts appointed a third liquidator to Mr Morris's team, because he and Steve Alkers are so busy on oth-

The Deloitte partner Ralph Priest is the new man. One of his recent jobs was receiver to West Heath, the old school of Diana. Princess of Wales, on behalf of the Charity Committee. Mr Priest put the school on the market yesterday, in Country Life magazine.

Richard Branson's Virgin group is seeking an injunction to prevent an escort agency launched in London a year ago called "Virgin Escorts" from using the Virgin name. Virgin Escorts was registered as a company in High Holborn, London, in February 1997 by Robert Brown of Kineston Upon Thames, Sur-

rey, and Michael Brown of Inverness Terrace,

(F) - Real (I) - Insterior

The writ lodged in the High Court last week says that "the Virgin name is one of the best known brand names in international business". Use of the Virgin name by the escort agency would "infringe the plaintiff's registered trademarks ... and the use of the sign would take unfair advantage of and would be detrimental to the distinctive character and repute of the plaintiff's Virgin mark".

The escort and dating agency was also guilty of "passing off" its services as those of Mr Branson's companies, the writ said. The plaintiffs said that, prior to the issue of the writ, the defendants refused to undertake not to continue using the name. The writ demands that the defendants stop using the Virgin name or anything like it, and dains damages of up to £10,000.

More Lloyd's names are preparing to follow the 66 who launched legal action last week against Norwich Union Life Insurance, over guarantees the company sold to names in the director of the two Lloyd's businesses.

1980s. The 66 who have served a writ on the Norwich, represented by solicitors Harkavys. belong to a 200-strong action group, and more of the group are now expected to go to law. The case centres around guarantees, linked to life assurance policies, that Norwich provided to names for their use in the Lloyd's market, just as giant asbestos claims and "spiral re-insurance" were to push the market to the point of bankruptcy.

No figures are mentioned in the writ, but some sources speculate each name is seeking to escape debts on average of around £100,000. The names are claiming that since Norwich had two subsidiaries involved in the Lloyd's market, Norwich Winterthur Reinsurance and Stronghold Insurance, the respective heads of those businesses should have known about the likely problems in the Lloyd's market. The executives named in the writ are Michael Falcon, chairman of both NU Life and Norwich Winterthur, and Allen Bridgewater, chief executive of NU Life and also a

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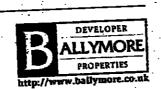
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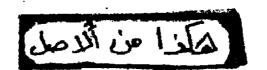
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Happiness is the 7.30 to town

What is it about the city? As soon as people are in, they want to get out. By Fiona Brandhorst

WHEN Alex White leaves his home near Peterborough for work every morning, a little plaque on the house opposite reminds him just how far he has to travel: London

We all know someone like Alex, indeed, we may even be like Alex, or one of the many distillusioned Londoners who packs his bags and heads for the towns and villages that make up commuter land in search of decent schools, less aggressive driving or perhaps just a better life.

Deciding to commute to his job in central London was the easy part for Geoff Hurrell. It was just a question of from where. With his wife, Julie, expecting their third child, they were rapidly outgrowing their modern south London town house and knew that it was time to make their longed-for break for the country.

Weekends were spent investigating the commuter trail from Essex through Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire and finally down to Kent. Tunbridge Wells was the end of their line. Geoff, an IT specialist, puts it down to a "gut feeling". They quickly realised they couldn't afford Tunbridge Wells itself so they took a look at surrounding villages.

They were dreaming of a period country cottage with oak beams and a roaring fire; they bought a four-bedroom, detached house circa 1970, but it is still "brilliant" in their eyes: "spacious rooms and large garden". The village had to be pretty, have a good school and "a couple of pubs, a post office and a Chinese". Pembury, now part of Tumbridge's sprawl fitted the bill. "We haven't looked back," says Julie who, a year after their move, feels well settled in a community with a high percentage of ex-Londoners. Geoff now drives to the station in one's feeling unsociable."



The jewel in the commuters' crown: St Albans life, as experienced by John and Fiona Bennett, and daughter Rosalind

Photograph: Keith Dobney

an old banger "absorbed into the cost of the move" while Julie keeps the child-friendly estate car. "I'd take the bus to the station if it was more reliable," says Geoff, who aims for the 7.30am service to Charing Cross because it's always a new train "quiet and air conditioned" and he'll get a seat. His monthly season ticket costs around £230.

Geoff says he enjoys the 51-minute journey - he can read the paper, use his laptop or just "switch off". So does commuter chat become a bind when you're used to ignoring your neighbour at the bus stop in London? Geoff says it's all about body language. "You soon get the message if some-

Having to drive home from the station in the evening means a couple of beers after work is a distance memory, but Geoff can live with that. On a good day he aims to be home around 7.30pm, just in time to catch Rebecca, five, and Alex, four, before they go to bed. But he misses one-year-old Emma who is so used to seeing him leave the house that until recently she thought he was called "bye, bye".

John Bennett's daughter, Rosalind, is only eight months old yet she can determine which train he'll catch to London every morning. If she sleeps in he can still make it to the office for 8.30am. John, a solicitor, lives with his wife, Fiona, in St

where you can catch a Thameslink train, without checking the timetable, and around 25 minutes later find yourself pulling into London's Farringdon Station.

That and the good reputation of local schools have led to property prices rocketing in recent years. According to Frost's, a local estate agent, two/three bedroom "commuter cottages" in the conservation area of £179.950. And almost every person registering with the agency has a London address. John and Fiona left London three years ago, choosing St Albans because of family ties. "It's hardly the rural idyll," says John, "but

Albans - the jewel in the commuter's crown, it has the feel of a big little town." They didn't want a drive to the station, so living in an out of town development was out of the question. John starts the day with a brisk 15-minute walk to the station. Generally, the Thameslink service is good, albeit crowded, but when it's bad, it's really bad and John is aware of the lack of an alternative route to work, something that living in London provided. His annual season tickthe town are priced between £110,000 and et costs £2,236 and includes tube travel in central London. In spite of its cost he has no regrets. "The 20-minute journey is just long enough to read a few chapters or catch

up on some sleep." Carrie Elderfield is definitely on the out-

The Bells expect

to get £350 a

week rent on

their home in

south London

Peter Macdiarmid

Photograph:

side looking in. "Mentally I'm not a commuter," she says. "I love observing but I haven't joined the club." The club, according to Carrie, being largely male middle Englanders. She said goodbye to Crouch End, in north London, almost four years ago and took the train west to the Chilterns where she feels at home with its "comforting landscapes". When she left Crouch End it was just beginning to become the hub of the universe; a place that never slept - I hated all that".

Eighteen months after her move, Carrie married Roger, another ex-north Londoner and "hopeless townie". However, he's quickly become the star of the local pub quiz. Roger divides his time between commuting to the City by train or Europe by plane from Heathrow - only 40 minutes on the motorway. "That's an accidental bonus of living here," says Carrie.

But for some the daily commute finally takes its toll, Paul and Stella Bramwell moved to Lindfield (tile-hung houses, duck pond and historic parish church), near Haywards Heath, in Sussex, from London seven years ago. "Stella worked in Crawley and I could get the train straight into London," says Paul, who enjoyed the peace and quiet of the countryside at weekends. But after four years, Paul began to look at his fellow travellers and recognised a "lifer" feel about them. "I didn't want to qualify for the gold watch after 25 years of commuting," he says.

The three-hour round trip between Haywards Heath and London's Victoria made Paul, who works in advertising, question his priorities, especially when he and Stella had children. "I hardly saw Grace and Emily all week," says Paul. "It made us wonder why we'd had children in the first place."

When a job opportunity came up in Solihull in the Midlands last year, it was a chance to change their lifestyle once again. Now Paul, though still a commuter, has a 20-minute drive to work from their Bromsgrove home and he's usually home in time to see the children before bed. "Both moves have been good for us," adds Stella. "Lindfield was very relaxing. If it wasn't for the commuting, we'd probably still be there."

Sun, long days of golf, and incredibly cheap mortgages

IF YOU spent a glorious per cent on top of the pur-two weeks in sunny Spain, chase pace when you buy in played endless rounds of Spain. This covers transfer golf in Portugal or sunk a tax, registration fee, solicifew glasses of red wine in tor's fee and notary's fee. Italy while on holiday last The local tax on a £50,000 year, you might well be property is around £125 a thinking about buying a year and a wealth tax, second home abroad now the weather is cold and

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But are you aware of the so? Bills have to be paid, as do local taxes, income tax and - if you are on a decharges to cover the upkeep of communal swimming pools, gardens, etc.

Tony and Christine Collings bought a plot of land near Torrevieja on the Costa Blanca, Spain, last February for a three-bedroom chalet to be built. "I wasn't aware of how you hought a property in Spain" says Tony, "but Ultra Villas, which I bought the property through, explained exactly how it all works and they have been extremely helpful throughout. I also hought myself a book called You and the Law, which I read thoroughly so I understand how their system

works". Tony, who is casino manager for the Palm Beach Chub in London, paid half in cash, half with a Spanish mortgage to put his mind at rest that everything was above board. Like our banks, Spanish banks check out the title of property and land before they lend.

It is quite easy to obtain an overseas mortgage in Spain. This is very cheap at the moment, 4.25 per cent for the first year, rising to 5.85 per cent after that.

It cost the Collings £90 to have the water meter installed and the same to connect the electricity. "I transfer money each month into a bank account there to cover the mortgage and anything else," says Tony. The water bill is taken straight out of your account - if you do not have the funds, they cut you off. I also pay my Spanish solicitor an annual retainer of £90 and he deals with all bills or any help I might

In all, you pay around 11 mission free.

payable whether you make an income out of your property or not, is a little less.

In Greece, you will pay financial liabilities of doing around 11 to 12 per cent purchase costs; in Portugal costs are a bit lower around 8 to 9 per cent and velopment - community in France, you are looking at around 11 per cent. "One thing you must be aware of when buying in France in their inheritance tax," says Trevor Bennett, of Bennetts solicitors, which deals with the purchase of properties in all those countries. "Before you buy the property, you must seek legal advice on this."

In Italy you also pay around 10 to 11 percent purchase costs. Rates are low - between £150 to £400 a year. A rubbish tax is also due which ranges between £50 and £200.

"Everything is perfectly straightforward, as long as you do not do it yourself," says Linda Travella, of Casa Travella, who sells property in northern Italy. "A new home might well have a mortgage on it, which although the notary or lawyer will pick up and have it cancelled, it is possible to be landed with mortgage payments you know nothing about if you try to buy on your own". A two-bedroom village property in Liguria costs around £38,000 and a large period apartment on Lake Como, from around

£85,000. Things are more straightforward and much cheaper, if you buy your retreat in Florida. Here charges will be not much more than 4 per cent, which includes title insurance. There is a 1 per cent annual property tax and community charges depend on the type of development.

The International Property Show is on today and tomorrow at The Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London, W1, 10.30am - 5pm, ad-

They can even charge rent on the cat

SEVENTEEN years of short holidays have prompted Dave Bell and Megan Jones to take drastic action. Giving ap their jobs in caring professions -he's a mental health muse, she's a drugs researcher - they are about to let their home and. travel the world for six months with daughters Lily and Ruby.

"We've thought about it for years and now is the time before Ruby starts secondary school," says Dave. The family have been saving hard for the trip but for that "rainy day when we come back" they are renting out their four -bedroom, Brixton terrace property through agents Barnard Marcus, "We tried a couple until we found some who offered good service and the best deal. We're renting to single sharers and are surprised by how much we can charge."

Dave and Megan will receive £350 per week but must pay 16 per cent commission to their agents. Could they avoid this penalty by letting their property independently? "We'll be out of the country so we want the security of knowing someone will visit regularly. We paid £80 for an extremely thorough inventory clerk who made a note of any rips in the curtain their return and deduct damage

from the deposit. The family's house was very much in demand. How did they choose their prospective tenants? "The agents checked references and financial status which helped. In the end we've



linings." The clerk will take a final inventory in August before a foot wrong. I imagine it will be like This Life – there may be a few relationship problems but no wild parties," says Dave, a self-professed "trusting person", who is leaving most of their furniture but is locking away personal possessions in the loft on the agent's advice.

gone for a group of trainee so- moved all Spice Girls posters, authorities and housing associlicitors as they can't afford to put but negotiations are ongoing ations have private rental over the fate of Billy the cat. A friend has agreed to cat-sit but the tenants want Billy to stay. cat," says Dave.

"It seems a bit much paying for the pleasure of looking after our There are other options for renting out your home, particularly if you prefer a longer-Dave has decorated and reterm arrangement. Many local

schemes which find landlords for people on their waiting lists.

Woking Borough Council more properties. Its role is mainly introductory and tenants. often homeless families, pay rent directly to the landlord.

£500 against which a landlord erty, leaving us with constant recan claim for damage, although this is rare according to Jan Chapman, who runs the scheme. Who is the typical garden. We eventually got it takpeople who've inherited and it and wasn't too happy."

rents but it does agree an in- riod, the minimum lease that ventory, make follow up visits to Swale would accept. check all is well and negotiate between landlord and tenant. It frequently finds replacements if tenants leave prematurely, as public housing is scarce and waiting lists are long.

Some authorities and associations extend the scheme by giving deposits to landlords and repairing the property if it gets damaged.

Steve Twyman owns a twobedroom, Sixties-built terrace home on the Isle of Grain, which he bought in the mid-1980s. "I'd like to sell," says Steve, now living in Forest Hill, London, "but I'm in negative equity so I'm waiting for prices to rise.'

He has a two-year lease with Swale, his local authority, which collects rent, does repairs and guarantees tenants for as long as he wants. Steve accepts he is introduced a scheme 18 months not getting the maximum ago and is about to advertise for amount of rent for his house but prefers the security of a guaranteed income because of bad experiences with tenants. "Our agents were useless and didn't The council sets a bond of keep a good eye on the prop- 924 2536

pairs. One guy moved out but had removed the fence and left an old MG in pieces in the landlord? "They vary, from en away but he came back for

don't know whether to sell, or Mortgage companies may they may have moved in with a be reluctant for you to rent out new partner leaving their own your property. Steve overcame home empty," says Jan. "Some this problem by talking to his have bought for investment," lender, Barclays, which even-Woking won't accept steep tually agreed to a two-year pe-

> Jim Chadwick, marketing director for Barclays Mortgages, finds clients who are having difficulty selling often decide to let their properties: 'We don't object as long as it's financially viable and on an assured shorthold tenancy so we can recover the property if things go wrong."

Barciays doesn't insist on mortgagees using agents or local authority schemes but recommends them for added security particularly if the home's are leaving the country.

Renting out your home can bring flexibility and finances to go with it. Tempted? As you read this Dave, Megan, Lily and Ruby are closing the door of their Brixton home, picking up their backpacks and heading for the warmer climes of the

National Housing Federation: 0171 278 6571; Woking Borough Council: 01483 755855; Swale Borough Council: 01795 424341; Barnard Marcus: 0171

THREE TO VIEW/ FARMHOUSES



WORSTED FARM, a mile from East Grinstead in West Sussex. is a late 16th century Grade II listed timber framed farmhouse with a range of outbuildings and stables. The five-bedroom house stands in nine acres of land. Recently restored, it has a 17ft reception hall, study, large kitchen and cellar. There is a cow shed. several stable blocks, Sussex barn, Dutch barn and garaging. John D Wood (01342 326326) says the price is £585,000.



CHERRY GARDEN FARM in Rolvenden, five miles from Ten-RAM'S HILL FARM, six miles from Shaftesbury, in Dorset, a terden in Kent, is a Grade II listed Kentish farmhouse with exposed timber frame, leaded light windows and a peg-tiled roof. well. Agent Phillips & Stubbs is asking £215,000 (01797 253323). says the price is £250,000.



three-bedroom farmhouse being sold with an adjoining stone barn of farm buildings, has long views across the Dorset Downs. In The 23ft sitting room has an inglenook fireplace and the large need of improvement, with evidence of a big, old fireplace confarmhouse kitchen has a walk-in pantry. Outside there are cottage gardens, former cattle byre, barn with a room above and a but more is available. Agents Symonds & Sampson (01258 473766) — Rosalind Russell

SATL

Their own little world

Penny Jackson on giving children space in the city

plaything. She gets up off her white sofa (washable) and opens the front of a town cooker. Real ones that is. This Potemkin adds. village is much more than a painted façade.

It is a child's world in a London house rather than just a child's room. The street scene which fronts the row of cupboards along one wall is as meticulous in its detail as every other item of framed and mounted memorabilia in the room.

mother of Paige and Emily, seven, clearly does not belong to the hand-me-down school of decoration. "I wanted to create something special for the children that was the adults could keep an eye on what was nothing like the rest of the house," she says. "Everything is pink and white - the curtains, the picture frames, the kettle. When they come in here to play with their friends it is their own world. They have their drinks in the fridge and sink to do the washing up and they love it. They even love doing the washing up."

Parents in town seem prepared to spend more on their children's rooms than those in the country. There are no useful outhouses to colonise and urban space is at a through so there are fewer places to hide a television, which wasn't the point at all." the clutter of toys and games.

If children are to be persuaded to play upstairs then it should be a pleasure rather than a penance, is Mary Hall's thinking. "I find I spend a lot more time up there with thing that looks more like the country the girls than I might have done. It's an escape for me as well. You have to use your £16,000. imagination, but be practical as well. The houses are made from panels of wood which can easily be removed from the cupboard doors. If you spend a fortune painting murals, it's awful when the children outgrow the pictures. But you can make these cupboards look different by changing the ma- mous amount of time in it which is perfect terials in the windows or the knobs or for me because I like the house spotless." whatever.

The real test will come with the Halls' new loft-style home - just down the road

IN her perfect pink room, three-year-old Building the 1950s Fulham office block that Paiee has no doubts about her favourite is not naturally associated with family life or pink-and-white gingham. "At the moment I am thinking of designing something for house with a flourish to reveal a fridge and the girls in the shape of a vast jigsaw," she

Often the simplest solutions to creating playspace go down the best. Simon Knox, an architect, was asked by one of his family how they could use a whole floor as a nursery, without the loss of one of the rooms. "We made a circular opening oft in diameter between the two rooms, which let Mary Hall, an interior designer and the light through but kept the areas separate. It was painted brightly with one step and the children thought it was wonderful. They felt it was special and at the same time happening in the other half."

The next project for his own children is a garden den - something with a deck and sliding doors where they can sleep as well as play. Anna Markham, who inherited a rickety treehouse in her Sussex home, has seen it grow into a child's paradise of walkways and rope ladders. "They play pirates, have picnics, secret meetings, and have even slept there," she says.

"Most of the materials have been recycled so it has cost us virtually nothing. The premium, which is not helped by the fact trouble is that now the older children are that as more reception rooms are knocked planning how they can get a cable here for

But for those who would prefer something less Heath Robinson, ready-made houses provide the answer. Not the plastic kind with the roofs that lift off, but somecottage in a child's drawing and costs at least

When Toni Friend first saw a Wendyhouse made by the Children's Cottage Company, it was instant love. "It was wooden and thatched. My husband thought I was mad, but I knew that the children would adore it. We have three sons and they spend an enor-

For those who have seen neglected playhouses decline into outdoor toy dumps, her decision has been vindicated. "It has carpet from their present house - in the Piper and specially made furniture and the boys



Something in the city: Paige and Emily Hall in environment created for them by their mother Photograph:

a Greek couple passing through London. room, more usually seen in magazines than

children will always look after something will be redecorating forthwith. So how much does is all this effort ap-Children's Cottage Company: 0171 223 preciated by buyers. Unfortunately it can 0876; Stonehall Design: 0171 621 9593; Mary be all a terrible waste. Beaney Pearce has Hall's house is for sale through Douglas &

JACKSON

THERE is a fair chance these days that the amateur developer can beat the big boys at their own game. The shortage of good houses, particularly in towns and villages, means that building plots are selling to frustrated private buyers.

The big

buyers

bottle

out

land

Andrew Brown, of Clegg Kennedy Drew, says even though they know in their heart of hearts that they are paying top whack, for them it is worth it. On single plots they are beating the doveloper every time because they have no profit margins to worry about. It's the same with run-down properties.

The last three people in the current bidding for two Cotswold cottages are all individuals. "Of the 55 people we showed around, only 12 were developers," Andrew Brown says. "They looked at the lovely position of the cottages and knew they hadn't got a chance since anyone who wanted it as a home would pay over the odds."

The cottage industry feel to the rental market looks like changing. Savills has identified six corporate investors who want to invest £400m in buying property to let this year. That will accountfor about 9,000 properties across the country, not all of course coming on to the market for the first time, especially since the companies seem par-

ticularly keen to buy portfolios. Savills regards its long-term interest in the rental market as a good omen for its future. At present the sector has a somewhat home-spun feel as about 56 per cent of landlords are private individuals. Apparently the companies are particularly keen on blocks in Manchester, Leeds and Bristol.

Space is vital at the moment. Berkeley Homes is building large leisure rooms with three of its houses in Horsham, Sussex. They will either be put above the garage or as an annexe to homes which are already in the region of 3,800 to 4,000 sq ft, which translates as at least five bedrooms, three bathrooms and three or four reception rooms. The extra room will be wired for office use or for children. Berkeley is even considering building basements into its homes on selected sites.

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that is special."

one night in order to show the cottage to just sold a house with a gorgeous children's Gordon: 0171 731 4391.

have planted bulbs in the window boxes.

In the summer they have picnics there and

in the winter they go out with flasks of hot

chocolate. The beautiful thing is they can

play imaginary games there with nothing

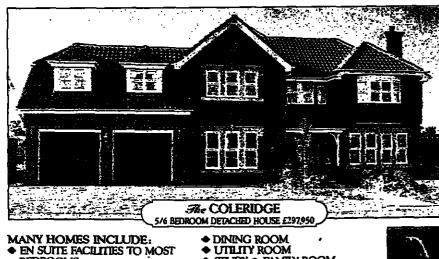
Toni Friend even woke her children up

to distract them."

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Property Classified advertising also appears on page 26.

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TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT



Friends in need

"Hello my friends and welcome to The Gambia. What are your names? Can I walk with you?" Me are strolling on an unpatrolled section of a wade sandy beach as the light fades into the sea, the grey-green Atlantic Ocean rolling in with a slow surge and then gently ebbing away.

I look at yet another new "friend". His name is Osman, the second most common name in the country after Lamin. His friends call him Donzy (as in Osmond), and he wants to show us the crocodile pool and the national park, "where there are real lions, my friends", and the local school. Maybe even a trip to his compound in nearby Bakau. We have heard it all before. Anyone thinking of going to The Gambia

for a real African experience - not a mindless basting on the beach, although this of course is possible too - should be aware that there are many, many friends waiting to make your acquaintance from the moment your feet touch the soil. On the first night of our week-long stay we chose one "guide" (there are about 10-20 mofficially attached to each hotel) and paid him 25 dalassis (about £1.60) to show us around the cal area.

We were staying at Cape Point in the Mariatou Beach Hotel, which was undergoing "renovation"; it was a building-site. Sweetie took us away from this nightmare, showed us the best local bers and restaurants, and introduced us to his friends on the market (who marked our cards for later). He also took us to his compound in Baksu. This, I am afraid to say, made me feel as though I were in a film, mainly due to the contradictions of daily life. Higgledy-piggledy shacks and no electricity don't quite marry with the sound of Coolio's "Gangsters Paradise" blaring out of a transistor, and kids wearing Pepsi T-shirts dodging goats to play with a deflated football.

After our visit to Sweetie's modest shack he was our special friend, and we were his for 50 dalassis a day, of course. We had a sim-

More coconut milk and crocodiles than discos and souvenirs. The Gambia gives you a warm welcome - even if you do have to pay for it, writes Melanie Rickey

ilar set-up with our cab driver, Seiko, who would wait for hours outside a club or restaurant while we enjoyed ourselves. In all, our "wages" bill for the week came in at a reasonable £40 and our liberal European consciences were assuaged by providing some small-scale employment.

The Gambia has 25 miles of sandy shoreline south of its capital. Banjul, and is only 300 miles deep. On the map it looks like a crooked finger poked into the side of West Africa, with Senegal surrounding it on three sides. It is named after its river, and was colonised by the British in 1783, who used the waterways primarily to transport slaves. For such a turbulent part of the world, it has an unremarkable recent history, notable only for the coup, and then counter-coup (both bloodless), in 1994, which left a 28-year-old man in charge of the country. Whitehall reacted by issuing travel advice warning against visiting The Gambia, the big tour operators evacuated clients, and the

tourist industry declined sharply. Today the country is still in recovery and as a result is presented to potential holiday-makers as a cheap package destination, with the emphasis on "cheap" rather than "affordable". Yet there are no lager louts, no discos pumping out the Spice Girls, and not a high-rise hotel in sight. Beach hawkers sell freshly picked bananas and coconuts - not ice-creams or tourist trophies. The bevy of bottle blondes who applied lipstick on the beach, however, seemed lost without those familiar sights and would have been better off in Lanzarote. Therein lies the country's main problem: the need to attract the "right" kind of tourist.

The climate is perfect for a winter getaway: it is dry and hot from December to March. Indeed, the sensation of arriving to a blast of 36degree heat only six hours, and no time difference, away from Britain is second to none for decadence value, and the weather doesn't falter. The only drawback is the Saharan wind which blows sand into the atmosphere, creating a haze that can sometimes last all day. But it does take the temperature down a notch or two.

Enjoying The Gambia is easy once you get the hang of it. Gambian time is not like Enghish time. Ask for a drink - the local beer, Joyful Julbrew - and it will arrive when the

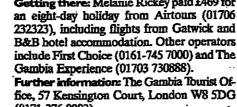
barman is ready. Head to Banjul, where for a few pence the local ferry dawdles across the mouth of the river Gambia to the town of Barra, loaded with cows, chickens and brightly dressed traders, and you find there is no timetable. "When will the ferry arrive?" we asked an official after a 90-minute wait. "Oh, any time, any time," came the reply.

While in The Gambia, there is only so much to do, see and discover. Every visitor goes to the local school, the nature reserve, and the crocodile pool to see "Charlie", one-time star of 'Wish You Were Here'. There are only a few good restaurants and a handful of jolly local bars fringing the main tourist strip. You do not have to venture far inland to find landscape typical of the whole country: languid lowlands, laced with labyrinthine sandy paths and speckled with friendly, scruffy settlements.

Our happiest moment was the discovery of a day out to Paradise Island, or Jinack, which is half in Senegal, half in The Gambia. It began as a day-trip and turned into an overnight stay at Madyama Lodge, a compound of 10 luxury mud-huts, with a central area for eating and drinking. Though the term "luxury mud-hut" may sound like an oxymoron, it wasn't.

The beach was completely deserted but for a few early-morning fishermen and the odd cow, and there was affordable food and drink and personal hospitality from our hosts. This experience, more than any other, may lure me back to The Gambia.

Getting there: Melanie Rickey paid £469 for an eight-day holiday from Airtours (01706 232323), including flights from Gatwick and B&B hotel accommodation. Other operators include First Choice (0161-745 7000) and The Further information: The Gambia Tourist Of-





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RUUD GULLIT My side of the story/26&28 Passion and travel are permanently entwined. To celebrate the first Valentine's Day to fall on a Saturday for 10 years, the travel section is offering prizes you'll love in our first 'smooth your way around the world' quiz

There are 11 steps to heaven. First, answer these
10 questions as best you can; in the affectionLove, Travel, The Independent, 1 Canada would be the best means of transport for them ate nature of The Independent, we value heroic endeavour rather more than total accuracy, ie make us laugh, and we'll forgive the odd mistake. Next, complete the tie-break on the ideal venue for smoothing, and you'll be on the runway for a free flight for two on the ultimate romantic airline, Love Air.

This carrier for canoodlers has an international network that stretches all the way from Biggin Hill in Kent to Le Touquet on the north coast of France. Normally, the lowest fare on this run is an instant-purchase £99 return, but 1. Success, Paradise, Friendship and Ogle are Love Air (01279 681435) is offering a loving couple a free day-trip.

The 10 runners-up won't have to seek solace in each other's arms - Cadogan Books is offering its perfectly matched couple of love guides, Have Bride, Will Travel and Perfect Honeymoons and Original Weddings, which normally retail at £8.99 each.

Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, to to get together - and why? arrive by 29 February (OK, we know there isn't one this year, but it sounded more romantic. 3. Where is the best place to find a MAN? than 1 March).

Entries from same-sex or mixed-sex couples are equally welcome. This competition is not Texas. Which was the stamping-ground of Tenopen to employees of Newspaper Publishing plc, their families and present or former partners. The Travel Editor's decision is possibly 5... and which of Alfred, Lord Byron? overly sentimental, but definitely final.

all real place names. In which South American country would a guy find them?

(a) Guyana (b) Paraguay (c) Uruguay

4. Hope, Derbyshire: Desire, Louisiana; Happy, nessee Williams?

6. In which US location would Gary Puckett be most likely to find true love with a young

(a) Union City, Tennessee (b) Union Grove, Illinois (c) Union Gap, Washington

7 ... and where would Blondie be blue?

2. IAN, SUE and IAN are in one country, while 8. Which is the closest airport to Kissimmee?

(b) Orlando International, Florid (c) French Lick, Kentucky

9. Wedding is in Germany and Blessing is in Texas. So where is Font?

10. River deep, mountain high: one of these geographical features is a mountain, while the other two are rivers. As the climax of this competition, name the hill:

(a) You, China (b) Pasión, Guatemala (c) Yes, England

Tie-break: complete the following in 12 words or thereabouts: "The place I would most like to be kissed is ...

In order to avoid the risk of a Clintonesque kerfuffle, any tie-break suggestions that mention one or more body parts will be immediately disqualified.

GREEN CHANNEL

How do you see the wildlife of the world without travelling? The Lovers' Trail at the Natural History Museum may be the answer. This is not an opportunity for loveydovey couples to smooth behind the stuffed animal cases (although presumably they can); it is in fact an activity trail for children to find out more about "the birds and the bees" from around the world, literally.

With a choice of 68 million plants, animals, fossils, rocks and minerals, the Natural History Museum can be a daunting place. But the Lovers' Trail demystifies everything, with a simple, fact-finding tour around the Life galleries. The trail takes you through the logically named Birds' Gallery, Creepy Crawlies' Gallery and Mammals' Gallery, and highlights some of the tactics different species use in courtship.

Pick up the receiver next to one of the insect boxes, and you can hear the chirps of South African crickets and cicadas from Southern France, and the hissing of a Dutch cockroach. "Try to imitate the sound of each insect," your Lovers' Trail guide says. And then it asks you to look around you. "Have you attracted a mate while making these sounds?" it asks. If you have, no doubt you should call security.

Spiders are not famous for their "ooh, ahhh" factor, being neither cuddly nor beautiful, but it turns out that the male hunting spider, found all over the world, is an old romantic: he has brought the female a present - some sort of food (an insect). The fact that he does this as a ploy to distract her from his real intention - sex - and that he sometimes cheats and gives her a duff present (a dried-out skeleton), makes one wonder about the similar-

ities between human courtship patterns and spiders'. Suddenly that cheap box of chocolates takes on a much more obvious meaning. Watch and learn, kids.

The Natural History Museum (0171-938 9123) is at South Kensington, London SW7. It opens at 10am on Mondays to Saturdays, and from 11am on Sundays, and closes at 5.50pm daily. Admission is £6 for adults, £3 for children and £16 for a family ticket (two adults and up to four children). Admission is free after 4.30pm on weekdays and 5pm

RED CHANNEL

Advice from The Gambia Experience (01703 730888) on how to avoid hustling.

Do not be over-generous when tipping or paying for small errands or favours; this will give out the wrong signals.

Be wary of well-worn "sob" stories, eg "No milk for the twins"; "I live in Brikama [or Lamin], just around the corner". The list goes on and on.

If you are walking along the beach when approached, it helps if you walk into the sea. Gambians are keen footballers and are invariably reluctant to get their trainers wet. .

LOW RAILROAD

Going underground on London's Tube network is rendered much easier by the use of escalators; but so sceptical were the capital's travellers when moving staircases were first introduced that London Transport was obliged to employ a one-legged man, "Bumper" Harris, to ride up and down all day, to convince the public of the devices' safety. On 18 March, at the London Transport Museum (0171-

379 6344), Mark Dennison, the curator, will be discussing innovation in a talk entitled "It'll never work" (w the case of the ill-fated spiral escalator, seems appropriate). He will also reveal how fish were, for a time, transported on the Circle Line - though escalators were never used as impromptu salmon leaps.

The event begins at 6.30pm, and tickets cost £6 (£4 conc).

HIGH RAILROAD

On 25 July this year, a small group will set off from London bound for the Indian city of Madras by train - the difficult way. An "exploratory grand tour" is being arranged by Hinterland Travel (01883 743584). Geoff Hann, who is planning the jaunt, says it will involve crossing the Caspian Sea by ferry, and also takes in Moscow, Tehran, Lahore and the Khyber Pass. Travel will be mainly in second and third class, and the expected one-way fare for the 60-day trip is £1,100, plus the cost of board and lodging.

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Lovebirds and the raging torrent of emotion

There are waterfalls and then there are the Ni- Steenie Harvey visits the most romantic, too, for Niagara calls itself the world's honeymoon capital. Of its 12 million annual visitors, 500,000 are newlyweds.

Lovebirds flock to Ontario's Niagara to share star billing with Marilyn Monroe in rather than its sister town in New York State. the 1952 movie, Niagara. The film was touted Though Horseshoe Falls and the American Falls thunder across the international border, ture can't control", yet the critics were more Uncle Sam only gets the dregs of this particular tourist barrel. The awesome views are on Canada's side. And the crowds view from every vantage point - from boats, aero cars, towers and scenic tunnels. Tightwads gather at Table Rock, a free lookout spot where even cynical divorcees get dewy-eyed. Horseshoe Falls has a splashdown rate of 1 million bathtubs per second and its spray clouds simply devastate a girl's mascara.

It was at Table Rock that the cascades had terbeds. Resort motels are packed even deed be an all-too-fatal attraction.

agara Falls, the widest falls on earth. Arguably Niagara Falls, the honeymoon capital of the world

> as "a raging torrent of emotion that even nasmitten by Monroe's wiggly walk.

Niagara's ideas of seduction range from rainbows in the mist to legends of Indian maidens sacrificed to the insatiable god of the Falls. Not that everyone succumbs to the magic. Oscar Wilde sneered that for newlyweds, "Niagara must be the second biggest disappointment of American married life".

Ah, but now wedded bliss is enhanced by heart-shaped love tubs and king-sized wa-

when it is -25°C and an ice bridge spans the Niagara river. Valentine's Day is the steamiest time of all.

Things were somewhat different in 1795. Then government officials declined to lay a trail to the Falls, as "nobody wanted to see them but small boys".

The early railroads proved them wrong, of course, and soon countless North American brides were demanding Niagara honeymoons. With the bridal trains came a barmy army of adventurers. Charles Blondin tightroped across Niagara's gorge in 1859, pausing midway to drain a bottle of wine. He performed the feat many times - blindfolded, on stilts and pushing a wheelbarrow. Schoolteacher Anna Edson Taylor survived a trip over Horseshoe Falls in a barrel in 1901, but other lunatics weren't always as fortunate. Niagara can in-

Such stunts are now illegal, so daredevils must make do with Clifton Hill, Niagara's "street of fun", where every night is Weird Night, Gruesome twosomes put their throbbing loins on hold and instead traipse doggedly between Dracula's Castle, Movieland's Waxworks and Ripley's Believe It Or Not museum, whose oddities include an effigy of a China-

man apparently born with four eyeballs. Some go on to snicker at monstrous cucumbers in the Guinness Records Museum; others thrill to Jeffrey Dahmer, who flaunts his waxen charms in the Criminals' Hall of Fame. Then there's the JFK Assassination Exhibit, the Elvis memorabilia, Niagara Falls Museum's two-headed calf, the replica Crown

But lovers should beware. On this street of unnatural wonders, it's not only a passion for Niagara that may well begin to wilt.

Independent Traveller's World

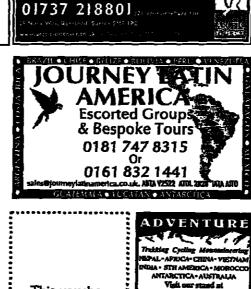
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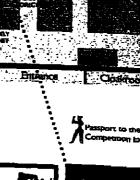


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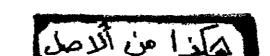














You need a break, and a shortcut to the soul of a city. This week, Andy Bull lives like a gentleman in Verona

Why go now?

Verona - historic, sophisticated and manageably compact - is worth going to simply for the atmosphere of the place itself. And, if you are not coming for the celebrated opera season between June and September, it is perhaps as well to visit in February, when The city is cool and far less crowded with the sort of visitors who hunt in packs, following the scent of an umbrella raised aloft by a harassed tour guide.

Beam down

British Airways (0345 222111) has a monopoly of scheduled flights from the UK to is Piazza Bra, which flanks the southern Verona. The lowest fare is a World Offer of £164.10 - if you book by next Wednesday.

Get your bearings

The city, surrounded by cypress-covered through its ancient centre, glows gently with the red, ochre and pink of its distinctive marble. Verona is still largely enclosed by ts 16th-century fortifications, and wears its past - Roman ruins, tall, slim towers that speak of the Venetian empire, and bulbous Baroque churches - with easy pride.

its telephone number, like many in the city, has just changed; dial 00 39 45 806 8680.

Watch out for ...

Vespa riders. The town centre is largely pedestrianised, something that has not been fully explained to these motorised masters of style who claim the narrow streets squeezed between the towering buildings as their own.

Cheap and cheerful: Villa Francescatti Youth Hotel (00 39 45 590 360) at Salita Fontana del Ferro 15; dormitory and family-room accommodation only, but the price is just £7 per person per night, including breakfast.

Leone (00 39 45 595 499) at Corticella bucket. And the bucket-hauler. Leoni 3. Doubles from £40, including breakfast.

Ritzy and romantic: Due Torri Hotel Baglioni (00 39 45 595 044) at Piazza Sant'Anastasia 4. Doubles from £100.

Verona is best explored on foot. The most central starting-point for a tour of the city sweep of the oval Roman arena. There is parking close by at Cittadella, where you can pick up a useful free map, courtesy of McDonald's.

From here the arena really is impreshills, and with the river Adige curling sive. It measures 150m by 130m, seats 25,000 and has perfect acoustics. And, despite clearly having been knocked about a bit, it still rises to 30m, dwarfing everything around it. During the opera season you can enter only in the mornings, but all day the rest of the year.

From the arena take the Via Mazzini The tourist office is at 38 Piazza Erbe; to the heart of the old city. Here, two wonderful squares - the Piazza dei Signori and the Piazza delle Erbe, form the centrepiece.

The former is soberly elegant, flanked by Bracing brunch the 12th-century town hall and the 13thcentury Governors' Palace, and with a statue of Dante in the centre. The latter, crammed with the flower, fruit and vegetable stalls of the market, is full of noise and colour. As it should be: this was once the Roman forum, where chariot races

Up five steps and under an arch from Piazza dei Signori, you reach Piazza Mazzanti. It is surrounded with houses from which balconies thrust, making it feel like another open-air theatre, except that the focus of attention is not a stage but an orn-Moderate and merry: Antica Porta ate, pink marble well. Let's hear it for the

Lunch on the run

Via Mazzini has many inexpensive but perfectly good places to eat, including La Bottega, Del Vino and Le Tre Corone.

Cultural afternoon

Though the Arena and the churches are the real treasures of Verona, you should come to terms with the dynasty that made the city. North of the Piazza Mazzanti you come to the tombs of the Scaligere. Princes of the Scala, who lorded it here from 1260 to 1387, before the Venetians took over, and left a considerable mark on the city.

To reach their castle, which guards the bridge they built over the Adige, walk to the northern end of the Piazza delle Erbe and turn left into the Corso Porta Borsari. This leads into the Corso Cavour, the castle, with its distinctive swallow-tail battlements, is a few hundred metres ahead on your right. It contains the city's museum of art, with frescoes from the 12th to the 16th centuries, and works by the Veronese and Venetian schools. It is open daily except Monday, 9am to 7pm, admission £4.

Window shopping
Walk along Via Mazzini and look longingly

at Duca d'Aosta and Emporio Armani.

An aperitif

Piazza Bra has gardens shaded by mighty cedars and a swath of the most fashionable - and expensive - café terraces in town. If you prefer coffee and cakes to Campari, try Al Teatro Filarmonico, off Porta Nuova, at about £3 a head.

Demure dinner

At I Dodici Apostoli (the 12 apostles) at Corticello San Marco 3, you get Renaissance frescoes on the walls and Renaissance dishes on the table - including horsemeat stew. Cost, around £20 a head.

Sunday morning: go to church You now need a voucher (6,000 lire, £2.50) to visit Verona's churches. Buy it at

the first one you visit; it entitles you to see four more as well. Best of the churches: San Zeno, with its altarpiece by Mantegna, the Duomo, and Sant'Anastasia with wonderful frescoes.

Fine romance: Verona wears its past with pride - the Roman arena, top, and the church of San Zeno, above, being among its most rewarding sights Photographs: Atlantide/Bruce Coleman Brek, in Piazza Bra, offers mountains of self-

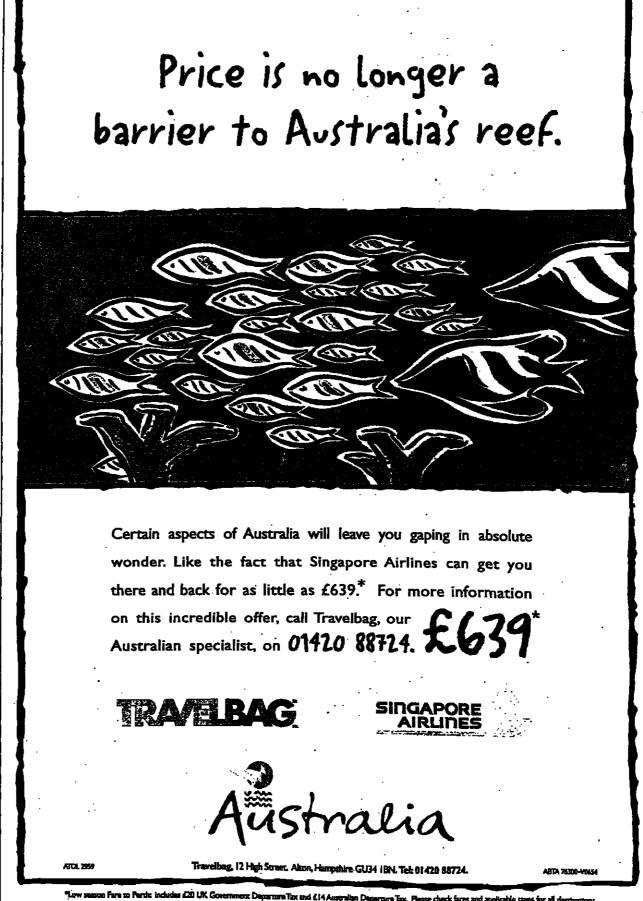
service food and wine for £5. A walk in the park

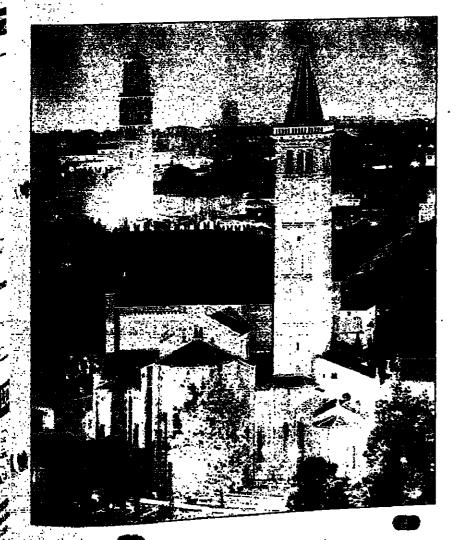
Verona turns its back on the Adige, but a walk across the Ponte Nuova to the left bank ushers you to one of Europe's most monumental city gardens. Behind the Palazzo

its formality as it battles up the hillside terraces, rewarding those who persevere this far with the finest view of Verona.

The romantic icing on the cake Leading off Piazzi delle Erbe is Via Capello. At No 23 is Casa di Giulietta, the 13th-century palace of the Capuleti, with Juliet's balcony looking like a tough climb in tights.

Monday, from 9am to 7pm, admission £3. If the story of the star-crossed lovers whose families were divided because Romeo's supported the Pope while Juliet's rooted for Emperor Frederick I - grips you sufficiently, you may like to take a one-mile detour to Juliet's tomb, which is in the Capuchin Cloisters - off the Via del Pontiere to the south of the arena and close to the Adige river.





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True stories from the naked city

Sheffield's new airport opens to commercial flights on Monday, placing the city of the Full Monty on the international tourism arena. A fully clothed Bob Carter offers a guide

The sky's the colour of sheet steel, the drizzle is slanting down, and the canal-side mud seeps into my shoes. I'm in the east side of Sheffield, a city where the buzz-words are regeneration and service industry. This is a conurbation where the remains of heavy industry rub shoulders with mail-order firms and telebanking organisations. No place for a tourist, surely, yet Sheffield's best ambassador of late has been a low-budget film set in the city's grimier quarters, about the desperate lengths men on the dole will go to in order to generate some income.

There are plenty of places that proclaim themselves in film: the Rockefeller Building in New York has been in as many films as Michael Caine. We've seen Hollywood Boulevard, the of the "club" in which the troupe performed. Now those incanals of Venice and even the former warehouses of London Docklands enough times; now it's Sheffield's turn.

I call Sheffield's tourist information office to see if they have anything to offer. "We haven't, but there are people looking into it," says Jane, who gives me the number of Destination Sheffield, a non-profit, grant-aided company set up by stakeholders in the city including the universities and various commerce and tourism interests.

"We've had a couple of enquiries about Full Monty tours but as far as I am aware there are no official ones," they say. Strange. Yorkshire people have long known that where's there's film, there's brass. Farther north you no longer move between town and district; you take your tour through Herriott Country, stop and admire Bronte Country and take a trip to the Sixties in Heartheat Country. So what about Montyland?

Which is how I end up by the canal. The Sheffield and Tinsley Canal reaches the very centre of the city, an area that used to be pretty much derelict and was called, not unreasonably, the Canal Basin. It's now Victoria Quays, where the city's oldest surviving factory has become a "pleasant pub for nice people", or some such slogan. So far as business is concerned, it stands alone on the waterfront beside yet-to-be-let railway arch shop units. It's all restored and shines too brightly, with its newly scrubbed stone and painted moorings. I even suspect the kingfisher is in on the plot.

Five minutes along the towpath, and it's all changed, a bewildering mixture of new industrial buildings and old industrial ruins, quite atmospheric and just the place to open a film. in Sheffield, tourist town, with the restored Lyceum Theatre Which is what they did, with Robert Carlyle balanced atop a

The canal is also where you may one day find them cashing in on The Full Monty. Boat folk are canny. Paul Grange is a partner in Aitken Grange Cruising Company: "We don't run a Full Monty trip; we have thought about it, and we may sell the trip in Sheffield as being based in the land of Monty,

They do offer trips and short breaks on their boat, The Tiny Purple. From March to October it's a small floating hotel, cruising out of Sheffield on two- to four-day breaks, and from Octoher to mid-January as a floating, one-table restaurant offering a two-and-a-half-hour trip with a three-course meal from £15

"The film I think was excellent", says Paul. "It captured the essence of Sheffield in its way. Especially the canal scene cost to the workers, either. where the guy walks past with the dog. That was totally coincidental. You could not get anything more natural than that."

man and a dog would not be enough. Where were the striprers to be found? "Male strippers?" asks Paul. "I don't know."
This voice brightens: "I do know where there are a lot of female strippers - some of the local pubs." So I try one, just around the corner from Sheffield United's Bramall Lane ground.

Here, Jean, in exchange for a vodka and Coke, proffers the information that South Yorkshire really does have male and female strippers, in a pub in Barnsley, and it costs only £1 to get in. Joanne (half of lager) thinks male stripping is, frankly, a bit passé. Fabian was doing it in a Sheffield nightclub, and going all the way, long before the film came out. Obviously I've chosen the wrong pub.

Time, then, to return to the real locations: let's try the exteriors first, where the characters exercised. Taking my trusty A to Z I set off for Parkwood Springs. No luck; no middleaged men in ill-fitting tracksuits here; but on this damp winter Saturday it was crowded with people - skiing. Just out of sight of filmgoers throughout those sequences is Europe's biggest artificial ski resort, and a climb or a ski-lift to the top rewards you with the best view over the city.

But no sign of The Full Monty here. Nor at the old Langsett School, which doubled as a school from the outside and job club inside. Part of it is now the Sheffield Boxing Centre, from which a group of young men with short haircuts and long arms emerged. I wasn't going to ask them where I could look at naked men.

A short drive to the aptly-named Grimesthorpe area (yet to fall victim to the passion for renaming that has overtaken this city), and you can find, on Idsworth Road, the exterior verted commas denote that it is not a club at all; a former cinema, casino and bingo hall is now The Inter Home Furniture

It's run by the Masoud family, and Rasab took me round. Fascinating as beds, sofas and even their own little furniture factory are, they are not The Full Monty.

By now it is getting dark, and still no Monty. But I have one big chance: Shiregreen Working Men's Club. Inside the club, on a weekday at 10am, an audience of women club members saw from the front what cinema-goers only saw from the rear: the final, all-out strip.

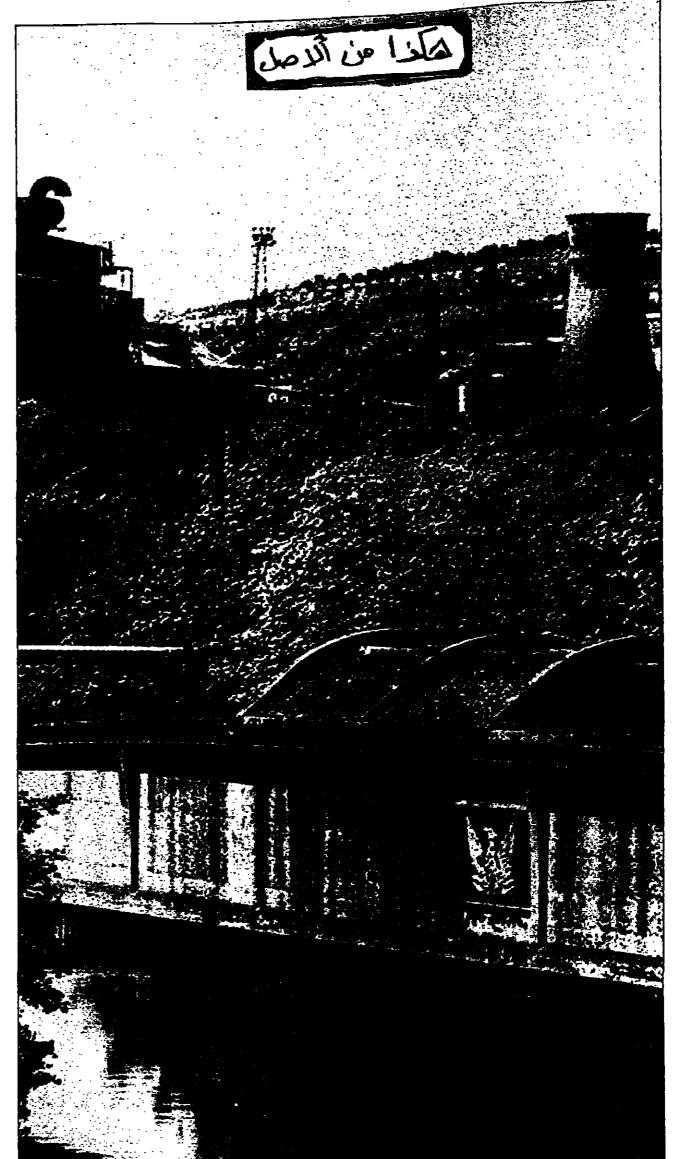
Secretary Terry Green takes me round: to the bottle store which became a dressing-room, white paint covered with filmmakers' grime for more northern realism; to the toilets, essential of course to any modern British film; and then to the ommittee room - not in the film - for a chat,

To the people of that area, he says, the desperate measures of the unemployed were a reality. It seems a million miles from the go-ahead optimism presented a couple of miles away by Sheffield's marketing arm. The divide, he concludes, is getting wider. Downstairs an insistent bass sound heralds the arrival on stage of that night's turn. At last, I think, a chance to see the real Full Monty. But it's just a duo with a keyboard, pretty good in their way, but not the Monty experience I am seeking. And they've even covered up the gold curtains the film crew left behind.

I get a bus back into town, and suddenly I am safely back shining in the floodlights, the Crucible Theatre next door, and the wonderful Ruskin Gallery. I walk past the inspiring Victorian town hall (soon to be incorporated in a new development with an offshoot of the Victoria & Albert Museum) past the imposing city hall and into what is now known as the Devonshire Quarter, where Saturday night is in full swing, shirt-sleeved queues spilling out of bars, cafés and clubs. I fall into the one without a queue and order a beer, as a jazz trio ploughs through Summertime, taking 24-bar solos each. And so my search for The Full Monty ends.

As a footnote, for those who really want to discover Sheffield's industrial heritage, a visit to Kelham Island Industrial Museum would save a lot of shoe leather, it shows the huge industrial achievements of big men with larger-than-life dreams and even bigger machinery. And it doesn't skip the

Sheffield Tourist Information Service (0114-273 4672); Aitken Natural maybe, but for a tourist on The Full Monty trail, a Grange Cruising Company (0114-243 0964 or 0802 471100): Kelham Island Museum, Alma Street, (0114-272 2106); Sheffield Ski Village, Vale Road, Parkwood Springs (0114-276 9459): Inter Home Warehouse, Idsworth Road (0114-244 4440); Shiregreen WMC. Shiregreen Lane (admission to members and CIU affiliate members only, 0114-249 2214).



Raw power: 'The Full Monty' has put the Steel City on centre stage

Photograph: Peter Byrne/Guzelian

FROM AMS TO SZD: THE CITY OF STEEL GETS AIRBORNE

You can fly to Sheffield City Airport from anywhere you want, so long as it's Amsterdam. KLM uk (0990 074074) is starting with three daily services during the week, with one on Saturday and two on Sunday. The main target is likely to be business travellers; you can't help wondering about their reaction to the sight of Doncaster and Rotherham as they make their final descent to the city of steel.

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It would not take a cynic to say that the last thing Sheffield needs is an airport, what with Leeds/ Bradford one way, and East Midlands the other along the MI. This, though, makes the site ideal, at least to Jon Horne, the airport's managing director, four miles from the centre of Sheffield, five minutes from the MI. and a 45-minute drive for four million people if they don't all try to do it at the same time.

He's come up from London City Airport to run this place, unkindly described as a tin hut on a slag heap, more kindly thought of as a small to medium terminal on a reclaimed area of open-cast mining. Sheffield, Home says, with campaigning zeal, is the fourth largest city in England, and until now, the biggest city in Europe without its own airport. Now "SZD", as it will appear on tickets, takes its place in

the OAG Pocket Flight Guide, its single service squeezed between Sharurah (Saudi Arabia) and Shehdi (Ethiopia).

The vision includes an adjacent business park, but at present the nearest building is large and dirty, with lots of pipes and a smoky chimney. An interesting welcome for the first airbome overseas visitors.

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Gallery of sounds

David Wilson previews the National Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield, a Lottery-funded project devoted to 'the most popular art form in the world'.

Hip-hop, trip-hop, ambient, house, garage, big beat, breakbeat, rap: pop, it seems, is constantly expanding. So the plan to establish the world's first centre for popular music, in Sheffield, may seem ambitious. Three years ago, while the centre's future was still uncertain, the Arts Council finally recognised pop as an art form. This allowed the organisers to apply for and win an £11m Lottery grant.

"We were ecstatic," says Tim Strickland, creative director. "And relieved, for an hour, then it finally sank in - the thought of the enormous amount of work ahead."

Music is well on its way and should open this year. Sheffield is a fitting location because it has an impressive music heritage (Human League, Baby Bird, Pulp), some architectural grace, and a lively entertainment scene. In a word, it's hip.

The centre is still under construction but already looks extraordinary. It comprises four vertical cylinders, aptly made from Sheffield steel. One cylinder is intended as a soundscape auditorium with 200 seats, dedicated to a 3D sound experience of remarkable purity. The second will relate the history of popular music and explain how it affects our lives, focusing on landmarks such as Band Aid. The third will concentrate on the science of mixing music, and the fourth will stage visiting exhibitions and other events such Por more information, call 0114-279 8941 or visit as record fairs and fan-club conventions.

Martyn Ware, a member of the techno godfathers Heaven 17, and a producer of artists including Tina Turner and Erasure, says: "It's a fantastic idea. A centre that appreciates and celebrates the most popular art form in the world today has long been overdue. It will allow everyone access to an unprecedented depth and breadth of information about popular music."

Everyone will be able to get at least a taste of the sounds on offer. It will be possible to walk in from the street and experience some outer installations for free. Throughout, the environment is designed to meet the needs of all visitors, including those with mobility, sensory and learning impairment.

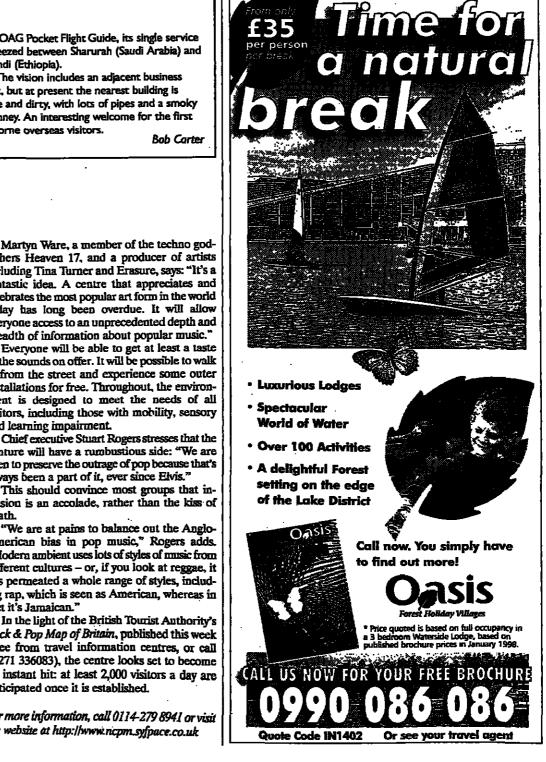
venture will have a rumbustious side: "We are keen to preserve the outrage of pop because that's always been a part of it, ever since Elvis." This should convince most groups that in-

Regardless, the National Centre for Popular clusion is an accolade, rather than the kiss of "We are at pains to balance out the Anglo-American bias in pop music," Rogers adds.

"Modern ambient uses lots of styles of music from different cultures - or, if you look at reggae, it has permeated a whole range of styles, including rap, which is seen as American, whereas in fact it's Jamaican."

In the light of the British Tourist Authority's Rock & Pop Map of Britain, published this week (free from travel information centres, or call 01271 336083), the centre looks set to become an instant hit: at least 2,000 visitors a day are anticipated once it is established.

the website at http://www.ncpm.syfpace.co.uk





SIMON CALDER

The extraordinary oversubscription of British Airways' "New York for £14" deal that lasted for about three nanoseconds last Wednesday demonstrates our collective soft spot for a bargain. Yet while the phones were overheating. I was trying to find something much more mundane: a flight between London and Glasgow for this weekend. And, in doing so, I discovered that the Internet provides more than a new means of communication; it also gives new meaning to phrases such as "cheapest fare".

British Midland's Cyberseat service claims to be the world's first Internet booking service where you can pay by credit card. What could be better than buying a ticket with a few keystrokes, safe in the knowledge that the screen had promised the cheapest fare available?

For a start, phoning British Midland reservations. On screen, I was assured that the lowest return fare for this weekend was £109. "Total price," promises the screen, until you get to the point of paying, when £10 tax suddenly appears.

Call me sceptical, but I was unconvinced that £119 was the lowest fare available (after all, that represents eight-and-a-half holidays in New York with the BA deal). The century-old technology of the telephone to the rescue. "London to Glasgow? That'll be £94." (Including tax.)

British Midland says its Internet system is directly connected to the reservations mainframe, and it must have been a momentary marketing blip (see also the BA New York offer) that made the £94 fare available. So I tried the next day, and the next, with the same result. Finally I found myself in the peculiar position of trying simultaneously to book a seat on a plane on the Internet and on the telephone (less

straightforward than it sounds). As the reservations agent was saying "£94", the screen was insisting £25

In the end I called ScotRail and bought a return ticket on the sleeper, for a more modest £79 - £40 less than if I'd trusted the Internet.

Railtrack also has a website, and a handy one it is, too. Rather than wrestling with the 2,000 pages of the National Rail timetable, it can instantly find a way from Penzance to Perth or from Ramsgate to Rhyl.

What it doesn't tell you is how (un)reliable the trains are. I found out the exasperating way, when a short trip from Walsall to Birmingham took nearly twice as long as it should have, successfully obliterating any chance of connecting. In the generous amount of time I had hanging around New Street station (not a habit to be recommended), there is opportunity to study the poster of punctuality figures for Central Trains - yes, I was at a really loose end - which show the sad fact that on a return journey you are more likely than not to be at least 10 minutes delayed.

Birmingham New Street is already the worst place in Britain to change trains; another great concourse discovery was that you have to allow 15 minutes to change trains here, three times longer than most stations. If New Street is the central nervous system for Britain's railways, then it appears to have had a

The whole business of travelling by rail is so complicated that you need all the help you can get. Railtrack obliges with handy posters at Paddington station announcing Impartial Advice. The reason is that several destinations are available from both Paddington, on Great Western, and Waterloo, on South West Trains. After reading the poster, only a fool would go from Waterloo to Exeter by South West Trains: the day return fare is £121.60.

An outrageous amount for a three-hour journey; thank goodness it isn't true. The fares from Waterloo and Paddington are exactly the same, a (still immodest) £82. Is it a coincidence that Paddington, in whose ticket office the poster is displayed, is the main base of Great Western



Lake land; the tower of the Bell of Wishes dominates tiny Bled Island

Photograph: Phil Robinson/RHPL

Time for Bled

What's Croat for 'I'll have another one please? David Sims finds out, as he sips his way around Slovenia

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Janis Fajifar drives an old yellow Zastafa 750 motorcar. It spluttered and hiccupped its way up the steep hills around Bled. He was taking me to Bled Castle for a better view of the oval, emerald-green lake and the Baroque church on its tiny island.

From the castle we looked down at the lake. To one side is the old Bled, Austrian in style. On the other side are characterless Fifties and Sixties concrete buildings. We could see men rowing gondolas across to the island church. The boatmen stand at the stern grasping two large, crossed oars and heave their burdens over the water.

The church is small, but it still manages to cram in six side chapels, a marble pulpit, a high, golden altar and several 15thcentury frescos. "The Church of the Virgin Maria is one of the holiest places of the Slovene people," said Janis.

From the church the Bell of Wishes rang its doleful tones as tourists strained at the bell rope. "In 1809 our women saved the island from the French. The women heard that French troops were going to plunder the church. So they took all the boats over to the island. The French spent three days finding other boats - and then they rowed themselves to the island. But they realised that they should not touch the gold and silver. So they said that everything in the church belonged to the French government, but it should not be removed. Later, a piece of folk theatre was played all over Austro-Hungary called The Courageous Women of Bled, as a symbol

of resistance against the French." I needed courage of a different sort the the next day. Practising Croat for "Til have another one please" at the bar of the Pri Planinchu had seemed amusing at the time. but the resulting hangover was brutal. We set off for Radovljica in search of a cure.

The village has a crumbling charm, its medieval houses decorated with frescus of the area's history. Although the paint is peeling and the colours are fading, I wasn't disappointed - and I found something of a hangover cure in the excellent bar, Gostilna Lectar, where mushroom soup was served in a hollowed-out loaf of bread. Here Janis and I parted company: I gave his car one last push and made for the train to Ljubljana.

Five minutes from the transport hub of Ljubliana, colour smacked me in the eyes: the pink Franciscan Church of the Annunciation, the cream and burgundy geometric patterns on the Co-operative Bank, the Italianate pharmacy where I bought aspirin folded into white paper. It is said that wherever you go in the world you will meet kids wearing Michael Jackson T-shirts, and Coke concessionaires doing a roaring trade. Before too long you'll also be able to have a perfectly pulled pint of Guinness. There is an Irish bar in slavia. "Slainte," I said, and raised my glass. Ljubljana. A new friend, Rok, took me to Patrick's. I was the only Irishman there.

and this was the place to be. We fell into conversation with the Prime Minister's secretary, then Rok introduced me to a young journalist who had been jailed for publishing a draft political plan for an independent Slovenia in the late Eighties.

- POLAND SLOVAKIA ALISTRIA HUNGARY

BLED BOUND

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100 miles

SLOVENU.

Getting there: The only direct flights between the UK and Slovenia are operated by Adria Airways (0171-437 0143), which flies non-stop between Heathrow and Ljubljana. The lowest return fare is £239 before April (£262 thereafter), which must be booked one week in advance and should include a Saturday night. There are regular buses between Ljubljana and Bled, taking around 90 minutes to cover the 33-mile journey. Further information: the Slovenian tourist office moved last Monday to 49 Conduit Street, London WIR 9FB (0171-287 7133).

The prison sentence had led to demonstrations as the people of Ljubljana came out on to the streets to support the journalist and his colleagues. It was this protest, I was told, that had led to Slovenia seceding from the crumbling Yugo-

I was destined for more clinking glasses the next day. Rok and I drove east to Jerusalem, the wine-growing region. In a breathtakingly beautiful village, with yellow and pink buildings enhanced by the morning sun, we wandered into a bar which still had a stern Sixties motto: "You will enjoy yourself in our glorious people's republic". Here men in pinstriped suits were drinking schnapps and beer. Below thier suits were mud-covered shoes. Church bells were ringing as we left; a bride, flanked by her supporters, was walking up the Tarmac road. Her husbandto-be was even better supported by his friends - one at each arm - who helped him out of the bar we had just been in.

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We pressed on to Ormoz, a few yards from the Croatian border. Here we spent Saturday afternoon on the terraces where the grapes are grown. Outside, the only sound is the klack, klack, klack of wind rattles used to chase away birds. Inside, it is altogether more convivial: in the tiny cellar of Curin Prapotnik we tasted a dozen wines of increasingly good quality, up to ice wine made from grapes picked in the depth of winter.

That evening we were warmly invited to big festivities in town. My imagination had been fired with ideas about wine celebrations and traditional music, so it was with some disappointment that we arrived at the Hotel Ormoz where the band was playing Linda Ronstadt's "Blue Bayou". Far from celebrating Slovenia's cultural past, tonight we were to witness the launch of a new range of Renault cars. As the band struck up the Bellamy Brothers' "Let Your Love Flow" I began to make my excuses, only to find that I was considered to be a VIP. I gave up gracefully and spent the night discussing the relative merits of Slovene beer with an Italian rugby team - also VIPs, as it turned out.

Next morning, on the way to the airport. Rok took me to another village for another schnapps cure. As the sun came out I reflected that if you have never had a Saturday night on the Slovene-Croatian border discussing gassy beers with an Italian rugby team, you've really never had a

ince 1992, each year we have sent many hundreds of travellers to Northern Cyprus. For a company such as ours, it is the most perfect place to offer our discerning clients, and when describing its attractions it is in fact easier to list what you will not encounter You will not find Northern Cyprus in the large

tour operator's brochures and consequently the number of visitors is relatively small and the tourism development limited.

For some the lack of development is a minus, whilst for others it will be the strongest reason for travelling there. In many ways the atmosphere is similar to that you would have experienced in Mediterranean resons some 30 to 40 years ago before the advent of the package tour. If, like us, you are attracted by places which still have a natural charm, warm and friendly inhabitants, quiet beaches and ancient sites where you may be the only visitor, then Northern Cyprus might be the ideal place for you.

THE ONAR VILLAGE

Of course you will not find a string of deluxe resort hotels, smart shops and all that tourism developers feel are essential for today's traveller. What you will find is a number of small auractive owner-manager hotels scattered in and around kyrenia and along the coast. For our part we believe the Onar Village to be the best. Located on a hillside about a mile outside of Kyrenia, there are lovely views over the town towards the sea and of the mountains to the rear

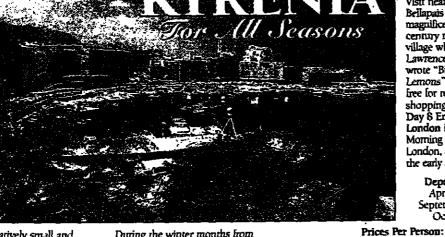
The property offers the choice of hotel rooms with private balconies or spacious villas which are scattered throughout the gardens. The villas each have a sitting room, dining area, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom as well as a large private patio. Facilities include a swimming pool, poolside bar, restaurant and library. With a total capacity of 70 or so guests, even when fully booked the Onar Village remains peaceful and uncluttered.

WHEN TO TRAVEL

Our agrangements differ from season to season. For instance in the cooler Spring and Autumn we offer the choice of a guided 7 night tour (Kyrenia & Beyond) which includes excursions each day to ancient Greek and Roman sites, Crusader castles abbeys and churches as well as the cities of Nicosia and Famagusta. Each departure is accompanied by a guest lecturer, and if the party exceeds 15 travellers, a tour manager will escore the group. Also during this time we operate a 7 night walking wir. Alternatively, you may wish to hire a car and arrange your own excursions.

In the hot summer months of June, July & August we offer 7 or 14 night stays at the Onar Village. These are essentially relax, read a book and potter round in a self drive car holidays.

Changing or one Quaru 1901. Deaths: Danie Curstant 2573, New 25750 Synagopic (Parks Danie)



During the winter months from November to March we offer 7 or 14 night winter breaks at attractive prices. Temperatures particularly in November and March can be surprisingly high, reaching into the high sixties and low seventies. whilst in the mid-winter the daytime

A 7 NIGHT VISIT TO THE CASTLES, ABBEYS AND ANCIENT SITES

Day 1 London Heathrow to Ercan by early afternoon Cyprus Turkish Airlines flight via Limir Drive to the Onar Village Kyrenia for a 7 night stay. Day 2 Kyrenia. Drive to Kyrenia for a walking tour of this beautiful old port. See the Castle with its unique Shipwreck Museum, the Anglican Church, the Folk Museum and Icon Museum. Afternoon at

Day 3 St Hilarion/Nicosia. Drive to the 11th century St Hilarion Castle. The view of kyrenia and the coastal plain is stunning from here. Continue to Lefkosa (Nicosia); walk around the city visiting the Gime Gate, Venetian Column, the Buyuk Khan (a 16th century inn), the Selimiye Mosque tformerly St Sophia Cathedral) and a traditional Turkish house.

Day 4 Salamis/Famagusta. Morning drive to St Barnabas Monastery which contains a collection of icons. Then continue to the most important ancient site of Salam former capital of Cyprus. After lunch enter the old walled city of Gazimagusa (Famagusta) visiting Lala Mustapha Pasha Mosque, the Othello Tower and ruins of the Veneuan Palace.

Day 5 Soli & Vouni. Drive west to Guzelyurt (Morphou) surrounded by orange groves and market gardens. Visit the Museum and Monastery of 5t Mamas. Continue to the 5th century BC Palace of Vouni: there are breathtaking views of the sea and the Troodos mountains. Descend to the ruins of Soli, a Hellenistic and Roman city, famous for its 17 tier stone seated theatre and mosaic floor in the 5th century Basilica. Day 6 Trikomo/Kantara. Drive to iskele

(Trikomo); visit Panayia Theopokos

high on a ridge with dramatic views.

Church, (early 12th-15th century) and

then climb to the Crusader Kantara Castle.

high will be around 55 to 60 degrees.

Take advantage of the special winter air fares and low season hotel rates available Kyrenia & Deyond from November through to March, based on a seven night stay on half board.

Prices Per Person: From £419 in a rwin bedded hotel room tsingle room supplement £75) and from £463 sharing a villa. with a Guest Lecturer

Summer in Kyrenia

From £749 in a twin bedded hotel room

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Winter in Kyrenia

Too hot for some, but if you like the high temperatures of the summer in the Eastern Mediterranean the following will be of interest. The month of June will be the cooler of the three summer months. You have the choice of half board arrangements in the hotel or room only in a villa. Special car hire rates are available from £126 per week.

Departures: June, July and August. Prices Per Person: From £495 in a twin bedded hotel room (single room supplement £75) and from £465 sharing a villa.



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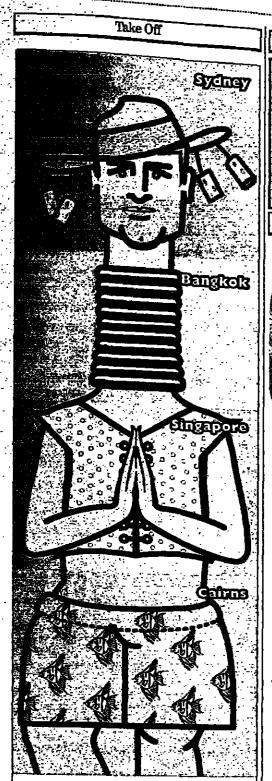
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Chain reaction: one particular growth industry on the slopes is that of nannies and au pairs. The demand comes from ski staff hemselves as well as tour operators

Slippery slope to job satisfaction

If you've been hooked this season and want to ski all next winter, writes Victoria Pybus, there's a way: get to work

in Berbier, the Scotswoman who makes the beds in St Anton, the New Zealander who escorts skiers in Courchevel, the Welsh chef in Whistler - all are part of a growing group who live for the winter months on the slopes. For many, skiing has taken over their lives; jobs and travel revolve around a return to the mountains for another season. For others, a winter spent working in a ski resort is a way to earn a little money and have some fun from November to April.

The good news for those bitten by the ski bug is that it looks as though next season there will be more work than ever in ski resorts - from chalet host to snow shovnance person. One particular growth industry on the slopes is that of nanny, as ski companies seek to satisfy the demand for childcare in the resorts. But there is always room for the entrepreneur who spots Selling hot roast chestnuts in the street, and

The English bartender who pulls the pints alpine traffic jams, are two examples of the spirit of individual enterprise in action.

With a wealth of job-seeking talent out there, the tour companies have become increasingly choosy. The personnel department of Inghams received 10,000 applications for the current season. According to Annabel Morris, the chalet personnel manager, over half the applications are binned immediately because the forms are not filled in properly, or soon after, through lack of company and product knowledge at the interview stage. So get up to speed to being abroad is to change her main catchon your area of interest, and if possible learn a skill: the only area in which there is a shortage of applicants is for chalet cooks. eller, and from resort manager to mainte- All the more reason to start planning now.

Skiing Holidays

There is a regular demand for au pairs in ski resorts - not least from instructors' families. British-based agencies that customor creates a demand and then supplies it. arily have such vacancies include Childcare Pairs (01630 652985). It is also possible to There are always drop-outs, right up to the music papers, but there is scope for apgoodwill of the reps, it is essential, as one ation Work, £10.99).

arrange such a job on the spot, since local people involved in running a resort are extremely busy during the season and need extra help in the house and looking after their children. Hoteliers, especially, routinely employ an pairs in the busy season.

The once popular image of the chalet cook is that of a fun-loving, husband-hunting female super-Sloane whose only concession phrase from "Okay yah" to "Ça va yah". is less true today. Chalet companies are only too well aware that being a chalet cook and host calls for skill, stamina, presence of mind and a lot of hard work. According to one estimate, there are well over 5,000 chalet staff, most of them female, working in Europe each winter. Although the tour companies begin recruiting as early as May, late. last-minute and mid-season applications still

Scotland

start of the season in mid-December. A surprising percentage of staff fail to last the out of the ski tour brochures). Keep an eye gruelling five-month stint of cooking, cleaning, budgeting, skiing and partying. Natural resilience may give way to a variety of aggravating factors (pining for partner, sacked, broken limbs or hearts, etc.) and cause them to leave their jobs. It is estimated that 25 per cent drop out in the first few weeks, so there is no harm in ringing round the companies during the season to ask whether any emergency vacancies have come up. There have also been many cases where suitably skilled people on a skiing holiday have been employed on the spot by making it known to the reps that they would be available for work.

Because of the dominance of British and American popular music, it is generally thought chic in various European countries to have an English-speaking disc jockey. open for jobs in Melody Maker and Loot.

Free enterprise

Ski burns think of some marvellous ways to keep themselves in sufficient funds to be able to carry on skiing throughout the season. Apart from the basic standbys of work in hotels, bars, restaurants, night-clubs, shops and transfer repping, there are plenty of opportunities for freelance snowclearing, illicit ski-teaching, offering a baby-sitting service and doing a morning fresh-bread-and-croissants round for chalets and apartments.

A more elaborate version of this last is the breakfast run. The idea is that you prepare and deliver breakfast to clients throughout the resort. You can advertise your service by posting photo-copied sheets to the reps to put into the welcome packs given to self-catering clients. As your pub-

ski bum put it, "to be in their good books". Another variation is the beer run, which involves selling and delivering crates of beer to punters. Publicity is again managed by DO

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handing out price lists and order forms to reps and punters. Beer is then bought in the nearest hypermarket outside the resort and sold to undercut the resort super-Other enterprising people have set

themselves up as freelance photographers on the slopes, and even make video films with send-up commentaries for enthusiastic punters. The great thing about personal enterprise in the Alps is that you can operate at almost any level: at one end of the scale, selling hot chestnuts in the street; at the other end, setting yourself up as a more serious entrepreneur - perhaps by renting a couple of chalets and going into the chalet business.

Victoria Pybus is author of 'Working in Ski International (0181-906 3116) and PEC An stand a reasonable chance of succeeding. Jobs are sometimes advertised in the licity distribution relies heavily on the Resorts: Europe and North America' (Vac-

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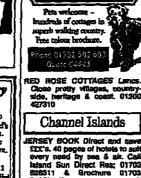
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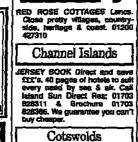
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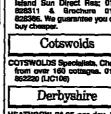
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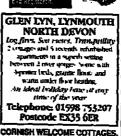












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Safe in the forest

Welcome to the pleasure dome: whatever your preconceptions, Center Parcs provides a neat package for a half-term break, writes Catherine Stebbings

There is nothing English about Center Parcs except the weather. The Dutch con-Parcs, except the weather. The Dutch concept of an eco-friendly family oriented weekend working their way through the at night so we could see the stars. Mumholiday camp within a forest is an ingenious one, an idea that can be used in any
Enrinnean country without beginning and her husband Polly: Center Parcs was really, really European country without having to

Jonathan, a teacher, took their daughters

good. You could only get to places on this

good. You could only get to places on this works. Longleat Forest is no exception - three. set among some mature redwoods, its 600 little villas are rarely empty, any night of Catherine: I've always been highly scep-

Center Parcs is designed for families, and stringently so. Everything is childfriendly and safe. There are no cars, no



At Longleat the villas may look disconcertingly like Portakabins, but inside they are clean, warm, spacious and highly practical. Though they are crammed together, careful planning assures a degree

Facilities are impressive, most of all the massive, glass-domed Plaza. Under one half lies a large piazza complete with restaurants, cafés and shops; under the other half are the spectacular pools, caves and rapids, all set in a subtropical arboretum. Slides and tunnels spew swimmers into underground caverns; waves lap it did provide a relaxing end to the against the mock sea wall; and parents sip cocktails under the palms while their young splash in the shallows or play in the sand. The pools extend outside, culminating in a hair-raising white-water run to the depths below.

At the other end of the forest the Jardins

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j. . .

range of options available at the Aqua Sana. my spent her time in the Jacuzzi.

Imogen, seven, Polly, six, and Claudia,

when I saw the rows of unattractive cabins dotted around the forest, and swarms of people heading for the pool. But belate-night openings - and security is tight. fore long I had entered into the spirit of A maze of forest walks and cycleways is it all and enjoyed myself immensely. Pracetched across nearly 400 acres, giving tically, the park is most impressive; every everyone a chance to find some peace - detail has been carefully thought out and the woods. I saw three deer and my feet but ensuring they are never too far away. the result is a civilised, safe and healthy

environment where children are in heaven. Personally I felt somewhat cocooned in an expensive enclosure. albeit a pleasant one. I would advise people to cater for themselves. We The deal tried a few restaurants and found them all overpriced and lacking in atmosphere.

Jonathan: Overall was impressed with the breadth and quality of the fa-

cilities and activities. Although sophisticated tastes are not catered for in design or food, the purpose of the place - family fun - is fulfilled brilliantly.

With small children, we concentrated on swimming, biking and play areas, but welcome in designated villas, but they I could see that, when they grow older, the sports centre will be equally satisfying: the various courts and studios are gorgeous. You do need to book extra activities fast. I ended up opting for an introduction to T'ai chi, as it was the only thing that wasn't fully booked by Saturday lunch time - but

being in another country, and the cabins were cosy. There were loads of activities Child care: There is a baby-sitting service to do but my favourite was the swimming. There were lots of pools inside and out. des Sports, a magnificent sports hall, of- with trees, rocks and caves. There were sells a range of essentials and includes a fers everything from tennis and football to masses of slides, and outside there was a good delicatessen. There are shops for

little train or on your bicycle. We rode our bikes everywhere and went for a long bike ride through the forest. There were lots of hills so sometimes I got off, but most tical of pleasure parks, so my heart sank of the time I kept up with Mummy and

The swimming-pool was really big and warm and the wave machine was on, sometimes. I liked the trees because you felt like you were at the beach. I also went rid-

Claudia: I had a little bike but I fell off a lot so I went everywhere on Daddy's bike. It was very cold, I loved the swimmingpool. There were lots of slides. I went for a walk behind our house and found some squirrels and a lake with lots of ducks on

How to get there: Center Parcs, Longleat, Warminster, Wiltshire (01985 848000) is signposted off the A36, 3 miles south of Warminster. Nearest intersections are Warminster and Westbury. Other Center Parcs in the UK offering the same facilities are Elveden Forest, Brandon, Suffolk (01623 872 998) and Sherwood, Nottingham (0990 200 300).

Access: cars are allowed for arrival and departure only. Access thereafter is entirely on foot or bike. Cycles, child seats and carriages are available for hire. Expect to cover substantial distances. Disabled access everywhere. Dogs are must be kept on a lead and must use the dog toilets, which are few and far between. Prices: costs vary throughout the year and depend on facilities in the villa. A basic villa for six would cost £249 for a threenight stay in January and £474 in August. Price includes villa, electricity etc and unlimited use of the pool complex. Activities: Numerous children's activities

are on offer, including horse-riding, Imogen: It was really brilliant, just like archery, cooking and T-shirt design in the kindergarten.

available day and night. Shops: a reasonably priced supermarket Tai chi and fencing. Meanwhile, those really good white-water ride. The water sportswear, children's treats and souvenirs.



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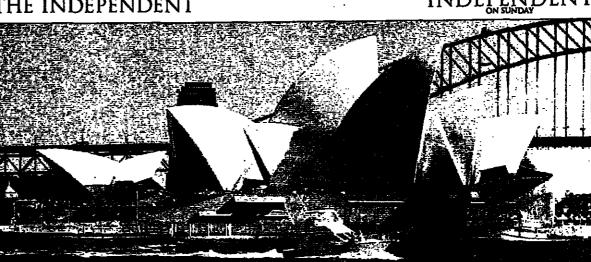
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THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE Win two tickets to Sydney courtesy of Lauda Air, Europe's fastest growing airline, from where you will spend two nights in the new Sydney Central YHA Hostel before exploring the Blue Mountains with Oz Experience. Then taking the 'Fair Dinkum' bus you will travel up the East coast and through the red centre of Australia. The lucky winners will experience 200ft of rush jumping from Australia's highest Bungy at 'Airlie Beach, all arranged by "Barrier Reef Bungy" and the feeling of free fall by tandem skydiving from 8,000ft and landing on Mission Beach, courtesy of "Jump the Beach Skydives". The Oz Experience pass includes a flight from Cairns to Darwin and transport down to Alice Springs, Cooper Pedy, Flinders Ranges, Adelaide and Melbourne from where they will take the Lauda Air flight home.

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A day will also be spent in an Icelandic "Super Jeep" travelling from Reykjavik into the highlands, visiting Gullfoss the golden 3. waterfall and Geyser, the hot spring area,

Dates subject to availability. The prize includes flights and tours. The holiday can be taken in March and April. Sleeping bag hire is not included but canbe arranged. Inclusive of airport tax.

SPECTACULAR SOUTHERN AFRICA One lucky independent reader will spend 15 nights in South Africa courtesy of STA travel (stand 23), specialists in student and young independent travel, and Kumuka Expeditions (stand 19a). This adventure

for I year. Winners responsible for de-includes an in depth look at Zimbabwe, taking in the mighty Zambezi river, the spectacular Victoria Falls and some of Zimbabwe's finest game parks. Included in gether and the winner must travel out and this wonderful prize is the service of three return together. Oz Experience pass is valid crew, camping equipment, transport and excursions which include a three day canoe to complete. Competition not open to em- safari and options to boogle board or raft

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What infamous waterfall forms the border between Zimabwe and Zambia? In no more than 15 words tell us why you should win one of our three fantastic holidays?

Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Lines close at midnight, 27th February 1998. Normal Newspaper Publishing plc rules apply. Editors decision is final.

Alternatively, you can enter at The Independent stand at Independent Traveller's World Exhibition in Manchester.









The future is a can of worms

They're small, they're harmless, and they almost magically turn rubbish into useful compost. Worms are rewarding, as **Daniel Butler** discovers

"Earthworms are amazing creatures - we've been using them to break down our waste for 4,000 years, but it wasn't until the last century that Charles Darwin recognised their value scientifically. He calculated that a worm eats its own to kick-start a compost heap, to £74.90 for a kitchen-based body weight each day, and noticed that in doing so it helps drain and neutralise the soil."

Heather Gorringe breeds millions of such worms on her Herefordshire farm, and runs a thriving business based around their subterranean life-cycle. Not surprisingly, she is a huge fan of the invertebrates, but this hasn't always been the case: "I've always been a bit of a tomboy, and much about worms until we had a problem with sheep man-ure on my father's smallholding," she says.

It was while she was contemplating this problem that she stumbled across an obscure book on worm composting in the local library. This prompted her to begin some clumsy experiments using stock bought from a local angling shop, only to be amazed by the results. Within months her charges had converted a huge pile of manure into topquality soil conditioner: "It would have taken two years to ret down conventionally," she says. "But the worms managed it in three months."

Here was something that was interesting, fun and a talking-point in the local pub. "I was looking for something rewarding to do," Heather continues, "and this

So began Wiggly Wigglers, the company Heather founded to market worm-based composting. At first she worked mainly with farmers and local authorities, but as the business grew she branched into the domestic matket, selling worm-filled bins suitable for modern kitchens. The business took off and, following her marriage in 1992.

Ous gardeners as the best compost available. The going Heather moved with her beloved worms into her husband's rate is £1 a litre for the crumbly black soil, compared with farm at Blakemore, near Hay-on-Wye.

One of the core attractions of worms, of course, is that they are small. Huge numbers can be housed in a confined space: perfect for a crowded world. As a result Wiggly Wigglers is also suitably compact – although the company has a turnover of £150,000. Apart from a small office on the first floor of the main farmhouse, it occupies just a small stable block and half of a small, concreted yard where the breeding stock of three indigenous species do their stuff in a 20-yard-long pyramid of cow dung. "We want the business to grow, but whatever happens, we want to stay based here," says Heather.

So far at least, growth has been rapid - increasing by around 50 per cent each year, and Wiggly Wigglers now has three full- and two part-timers, all of whom are women. When quizzed about this imbalance of the sexes. Heather simply giggles. "I've no idea why we're all women - it's Wiggly Wigglers 01981-500391 - or visit www.mystworld. simply the way things have gone."

ANTIQUE REPLICA

OFFICE FURNITURE

In general the bulk of the company's business comes from composting. Domestic kits form the most important elements of this, ranging from a £8.45 bag of 350 worms "Can O Worms". The last is an ingenious stack of sieves through which the worms climb, while their casts drop to the bottom. When the lowest layer is full, it is removed, emptied and returned to the top.

A third of all composting business comes from local authorities. Some councils want to give subsidised bins to ratepayers (although Heather is averse to giving them away liked getting my hands dirty, but I'd never really thought free: "Unless people pay for something they don't appreciate it, and the worms can suffer," she says). Others want worms to boost reed beds planted below landfill sites to break down leaching effluent, while an important minority need help dealing with dog excrement - although trials so far have been inconclusive: "Worms appear to break this down very well, but so far we can't absolutely guarantee they will neutralise the bacteria and parasites which make dog excrement such a problem," explains Heather.

"One of the main driving forces behind all this is a desire to do something positive for the environment,"

Her colleagues are equally enthusiastic. "Do you realise that the average household creates between 200 and 250kg of waste a year that a worm would regard as edible?" says Louise Hayes, Wiggly Wigglers marketing manager. "In Australia, six per cent of homes have a Can O Worms. If we followed, can you imagine what impact it would have on the amount of rubbish we tip into the ground each year?" Better still, the final result of the worms' munching is a valuable product in its own right, prized by seri-10p for conventional, peat-based alternatives.

At the other end of the scale, Heather feels worms could play an important part to play in land reclamation. Worms secrete calcium as they eat, neutralising acid soil and increasing the soil's humus content. This reduces water flow through the soil and helps to stabilise pollution from slag heaps and disused industrial sites - particularly when used in conjunction with trees.

According to Louise Hayes, it is the educational aspect of worm-farming that the staff find most rewarding - and customer satisfaction: "The wonderful thing about a worm kit is that it is working all the time," she enthuses. "There is always something to look at -a bit of liquid, some compost and lots of slithering. It makes worms an ideal classroom educational tool."

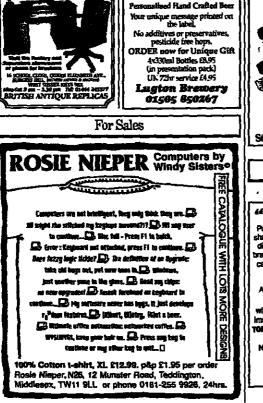


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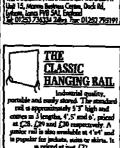
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Secrets of a muted hooter

You seldom see long-eared owls - which is why one man's quest to find out more about Britain's most secretive bird of prey turned into a feat of endurance, writes Matthew Brace

A deep hoot in the night - like air blowing over the top of a glass bottle - signals the presence of one of Britain's rarest and most beautiful owls. Secretive and strictly nocturnal, the long-eared owl (asio otus) is at home in woods near rough grassland. Its reclusive nature and excellent camouflage make it devilishly hard to find, which has meant previous studies of this species have been difficult - and results

However, recent research by Robert Williams of the University of East Anglia in Norwich has revealed important new information about this ehisive bird of prey. Dr Williams has found more evidence to suggest that Britain has a self-supporting resident population but also fears that the bird is suffering a decline in numbers.

A self-supporting resident population has been suspected by scientists and ornithologists but Dr Williams's evidence is the strongest yet to prove it exists. "There have been records of long-eared owls here for years. All the places in East Anglia ending in Hoo were named after the call of the male long-eared owl," Dr Williams said. "It was not known whether all the winter migrants returned to Scandinavia in the spring or whether some stayed here to breed."

Many long-eared owls still make that perilous journey each spring from Britain to their northern breeding grounds. Their numbers vary from year to year, with peaks every three to five years. But Dr Williams discovered that those owls living in southern England, where prey is more consistent and reliable, seem to be resident

"If it is a particularly poor year for prey or an especially harsh winter, the resident birds will moderate their breeding and maybe not even breed at all," he said.

During his PhD study, Dr Williams also discovered that long-eared owls have lower juvetile and adult survival rates than tawny owls, which are doing well at the moment, and that the UK population was dwindling, with the major causes of death being predation, starvation and had weather, as well as increasing numbers being killed on the road.

"They do seem to have declined this century. We don't know what their natural level is because they are so secretive, but the Victorian naturalists talked about them as if they were much more widespread than they are today.

"The naturalist CB Ticehurst said they were more common in parts of the south than the tawny owl," Dr Williams added. "As the tawny has increased in numbers recently, the longeared owl has appeared to decline. We still don't know if there is a connection between the two. We also know about the decline from local county bird reports. They don't breed at all in Cornwall and there are very few pairs in the south tween 1,000 and 10,000 pairs in the UK now. My guess would be around 2,000 pairs."

The chief reason behind the decline is the problem affecting many bird species - agricultural and land-use changes which have meant the destruction of the blackthorn scrub and fenland of the long-eared owl's natural habitat. The owl is a vole specialist and relies

on this rough grassland for hunting. Dr Williams is keen to draw attention to the plight of the species and possibly get it registered as a bird of concern. During his three-year

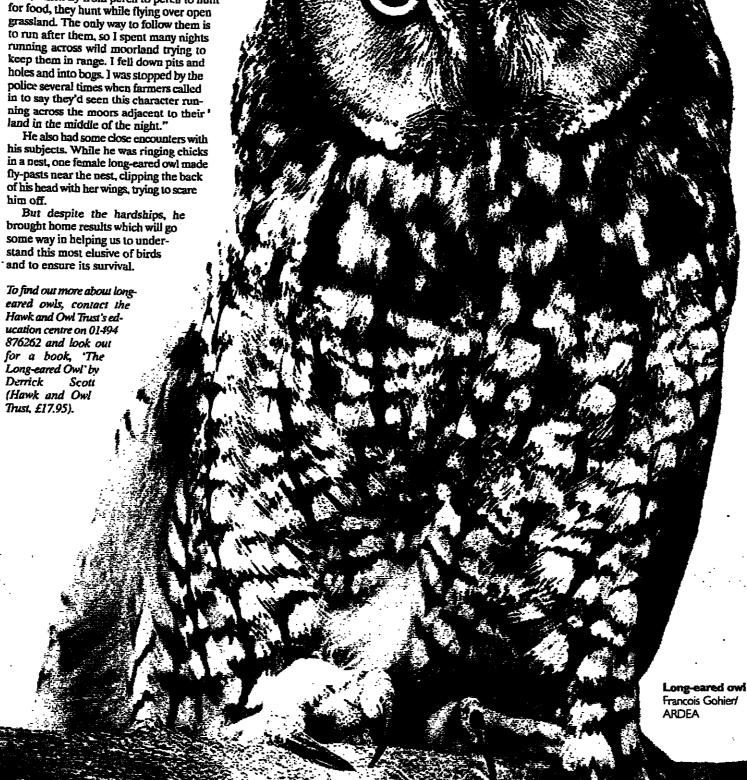
Y. Y.

study he found 24 nests with eggs (indicating a breeding pair) and went to extraordinary lengths to get those results, spending nine months in the wilds of Kielder Forest in Northumbria, living owl hours, with only one trip home every four weeks, and braving an icy Force Six wind on the Old Hall Marshes in Essex. "Radio tracking long-eared owls is really difficult because their range is so great," Dr Williams explained. They are not like tawny owls, which fly from perch to perch to hunt for food, they hunt while flying over open grassland. The only way to follow them is to run after them, so I spent many nights

keep them in range. I fell down pits and holes and into bogs. I was stopped by the police several times when farmers called in to say they'd seen this character running across the moors adjacent to their land in the middle of the night." He also had some close encounters with his subjects. While he was ringing chicks

of his head with her wings, trying to scare But despite the hardships, he brought home results which will go

Hawk and Owl Trust's education centre on 01494 876262 and look out for a book, 'The Long-eared Owl' by Derrick Scott (Hawk and Owl



£2,000 to the rescue: one guillemot, or an acre of meadow ...

This week's report on the environmental aftermath of the 1996 Sea Empress oil disaster has thrown a question mark over the value of rehabilitating injured wild animals. The independent panel of scientists concluded that almost none of the rescued oiled seabirds survived washing and return to the wild: 40 per cent died before or during the cleaning process and 97 per cent of those returned to the wild were dead within two months.

Treating each oiled bird costs about £40, and given the report's grim survival figures, it might be supposed that the rehabilitators would now be questioning the theories that underpin their work. Not a bit of it, apparently. "I don't care if it costs £2,000 to put just one bird back into the wild - it's fully justified. These animals are injured for unnatural reasons and it's our duty to try to put right the damage." Graham Cornick, who runs Hydestile Wildlife Hospital, is adamant that money should never be an issue when it comes to rehabilitating wild animals: "We've never put an animal down for financial reasons, ever."

"If you're going to be brutal, it's largely a waste of time," counters Dr Simon Lyster, director-general of the Wildlife Trusts. "Resources should go to something more sustainable - like a nature reserve, or a campaign to persuade farmers to be environmentally sensitive." These two committed animal

lovers clearly have radically

Rescuing wounded animals is worthy – but, asks Daniel Butler, could the money be better spent?

different positions. The "welfarist" Cornick believes man's duty is to try to rectify the distortions he creates, while in contrast the "conservationist" Lyster views the grander perspective: "It is difficult to think of any species that would benefit from the return of the occasional individual," he says. "But it is easy to find examples where just a few acres would make a significant difference - for example, 97 per cent of our flowerrich hay meadows have disappeared." The £2,000 that Mr Cornick might spend on one casualty would buy an acre of this.

So what good do our animal rescue centres really do? "Rehabilitation is a drop in the ocean, and will never have any practical impact on our wildlife," says Pauline Kidner, who runs a badger hospital in Somerset. "I do it because I enjoy it, not because I think I'm altering the fate of badgers generally." Likewise, Britain's biggest animal welfare charity, the RSPCA, tries to steer a median line. "Animals are brought in because they're in trouble," says Peter Budd, veterinary manager at the West Hatch hospital. "We patch them up for a second chance where we can, but they've got to be 100 per cent fit if they're going to have any hope at all." As a result, he

says, he would put down any amputee: "It's lost its competitive edge, and once back in the wild will fail fairly rapidly."

Jim Chick, chairman of the Hawk Board, which advises the Government on issues affecting British raptors, believes most casualties should either be returned quickly or put down: "There are far too many one-eyed, one-winged birds mouldering away in aviaries," he says. "Most have no quality of life and it would be much more humane to put them down immediately." But in spite of this hard-nosed pragmatism, he has returned hundreds of birds to the wild at considerable personal cost, knowing their chances to be poor. "Nature is brutal, and 75 per cent of young raptors die in their first year anyway. Most birds brought in to me were found because they simply weren't able to cut the mustard. I hope my returnees made it - but however hard I try, I can't change the way things are."

The scriptwriter and animal rights activist Carla Lane, who runs Animal Aid, disagrees violently with what she sees as this heartless line: "We have eight seagulls here which can't fly," she says. "The RSPCA told me to put them down because they would have no quality of life, but we gave them the walled

herb garden, with a pond and ladders up to perches. Three years later they're happy and bright-eyed because they can bathe, eat and do everything a seagull normally does except fly." In addition, Animal Aid has pairs of crippled blackbirds and hedgehogs, both of which breed successfully."They learn to live with these problems - there's absolutely no need to put them down," says Lane.

"Most animals live about five times as long in captivity as in the wild; people forget that nature is very brutal," counters Chris Mead, of the British Trust for Ornithology. "What really matters is not how long an animal lives, but whether it is playing its part in the grander scheme of things. The healthy chaffinch I watch from my kitchen window may be food for a sparrowhawk a minute later. But even in death it is boosting the chances that the hawk will raise young successfully. The 'happy' captive animal is merely existing; it is not playing its proper part in the food chain."

There are frictions elsewhere. · Alien muntjac deer, introduced accidentally at the turn of the century, are now common across southern Britain and cause immense damage in the bandful of remaining lowland coppices. The speed of their spread is believed to be due, in part, to well-intentioned rehabilitators releasing casualties into new areas. Similar problems have been reported with squirrels,

foxes and even hedgehogs.

Perhaps the worst problems occur with barn owls, however: "Until recently there were real problems with people breeding injured owls and releasing the young," explains Chick. "Not only were virtually all of the youngsters dying without their parents to help them, but those that managed to survive were seriously disrupting the breeding chances of existing pairs." Indeed, the situation became so grave that the law had to be changed to require release schemes to be licensed.

But although many reserves have been badly affected by the consequences of such actions, Dr Lyster says rehabilitation is important: "It would be unconscionable not to do something for an injured animal," he says. "Who knows, the child who nurses a hedgehog back to life may be next the next David Attenborough – and in the long run that could be of immense value to many other species."

Similarly, although Mead's research suggests that only 1 per cent of oiled seabirds survive a return to the wild, he thinks it vital to try: "We should never get into the situation where no one bothers," he says. "The sight of an oil-soaked bird being washed puts enormous pressure on the oil companies to improve their act: just don't fall into the trap of thinking it will help that particular

Basil's unhappy brush with the town

Are urban foxes being dumped in the country? asks Duff Hart-Davis

Poxes are beautiful creatures and great survivors. but there is also an element of mystery about them. No doubt this is mainly because they rarely show themselves during the day, a faintly sinister reputation also leads to stories such as those about how they appear sitting in graveyards when celebrated hunting men are about to die.

Country folk take a keen interest in foxes at all times, and eagerly report sightings to each other. So when an animal's behaviour seems out of character, word flashes round.

The latest strange story comes from John and Janet Thomas, who live at Monstay Farm, near Ludlow. One evening at about 7pm, a friend called to see their son Edward, who runs the farm. The visitor came in leaving the back door open.

Hard on his heels, a fox shot into the house and ran up the stairs. When Edward went after it, he was amazed to see it sitting on the landing, cool as any house cat; but when he chased it into his parents' bedroom it took fright and raced round on top of the furniture, scattering ornaments and piddling on furniture and walls.

In the end Edward managed to smother the animal under a coat, hit it between the eyes with a hammer and carry it outside into the barn, where he left it, supposing it to be dead. His father, returning from work elsewhere, found the house "in pandemonium", with bedding and pillows being thrown out for burning. Then, in the morning, great was Edward's surprise when he discovered that his victim had got up and gone.

To the Thomas family, it seemed obvious that this was an urban fox, possibly a pet, which somebody had dumped out in the country. They assumed it had come to the dustbins by the back door in search of food, reasoning that no normal fox would ever have run into the lighted doorway. Still less would a wild animal have sat at the top of the stairs and watched a human being approaching.

Their theory is backed up by another farmer, who regularly shoots more than 100 foxes a year in one valley, and has dispatched 14 in the past month alone. The animals have all been in good condition, but they are half-tame, and bigger and redder than local foxes, which tend to have rather grey

This farmer is convinced that foxes are being caught in some nearby town - possibly Birmingham, only 30 miles away - and turned out of vans at night to fend for themselves. Many other people share his conviction that this dumping is going on; the number of foxes in circulation seems outrageous, and many show signs of disorientation, hanging about in the open in broad daylight.

Yet experts deny that this is happening. Professor Stephen Harris, who has made an intensive study of foxes in Bristol, dismisses the idea as nonsense. He agrees that there was a time, in the Seventies, when some London councils used to release captured animals into the countryside; but he says that the practice has long ceased.

He should know, because until recently Bristol had the densest fox population of any city in fessor Harris estimated that there were 700 mature foxes in the city, plus about 900 cubs born each year. Some 20 per cent of these animals were marked with ear-tags, and no single ear-tag has ever been returned from outside the city.

Further, the professor points out that "mythical van-loads of foxes" would be exceedingly hard to assemble. "How would you collect so many at once?" he asks. "How would you feed them? How would you get them all into the van?"

His scepticism is seconded by John Haines, a freelance pest-control expert who has worked in Bristol for seven years. He has caught hundreds of foxes in cage-traps, but always puts them down humanely with a silenced .22, and is "totally against" the idea of releasing them into the countryside. Translocating wild animals is not illegal, but he



reckons it would cause a fox a high level of stress and suffering - and in any case, a strange animal set down in the territory of other foxes would probably be bounded out, and starve.

If dumping does occur, it is the act of soft-hearted but hypocritical householders, who wish to be rid of an animal that has taken up residence under their garden shed, but do not want to be responsible for its death. Whatever fate befalls a captured urban fox, its removal is not cheap: the cost of

trapping and taking it away is at least £150. Now, however, Bristol has practically no foxes at all, for in the past two years virulent mange has swept up from the Somerset Levels and killed 97 per cent of the city's vulpine population. The disease is moving on up-country. Here, 25 miles to the north, we have at least one mangy fox that is causing concern, as the disease can be transmitted to dogs and cats by mites on bushes or fence-wire.

Normal, healthy foxes, as I say, are part and parcel of country life; but animals that are sick, or behaving strangely, arouse no mean disquiet.

A rebodied Volkswagen Golf, with no rear headroom and a tiny boot, is the most talked about car of 1998. Gavin Green takes the New Beetle for a spin

It was front-page lead of USA Today when it was unveiled at the recent Detroit Show and got a cover strap on Newsweek. It was on the telly around the world and, if Volkswagen's publicists are to be believed, it has raised more interest in dealerships than any car they've ever launched.

I believe it. I've just driven one in America, and wherever you take the New Beetle people just stare and smile and wave, and come over all friendly and cuddly. Truck drivers gawk, kids wave, other drivers slow down and speed up to try to weigh up the look of the new car. Stop at the traffic lights and you're surrounded. Has there ever been a car that's created more street interest?

It's especially the middle-aged folk, who owned an old Beetle and associate them with a different sort of trip from the A to B variety, who come over to say "Hi". People remember owning Bugs, in a way that Escorts and Cavaliers and Corollas just come and go unnoticed. Bugs tended to be part of the family, whereas most cars are just transport. They also defined a whole decade. They were part of the Sixties, just like the other Beatles, icons of the most free and optimistic 10 years this

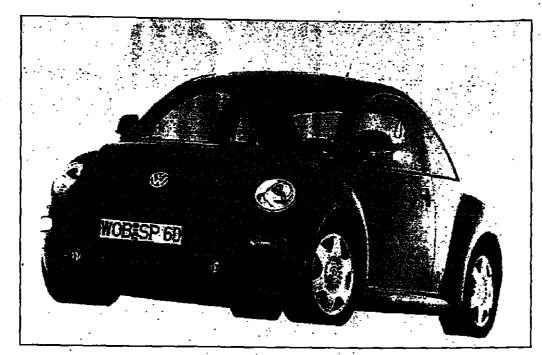
The New Beetle was conceived almost by accident. In VW's far-flung Californian styling studio, J Mays, the studio head, was working on a pet project - a Beetle-like concept car. Initially, the Germans knew nothing about it. Concept One - the "new Beetle" - was the result. It was shown at the 1994 Detroit Show, with

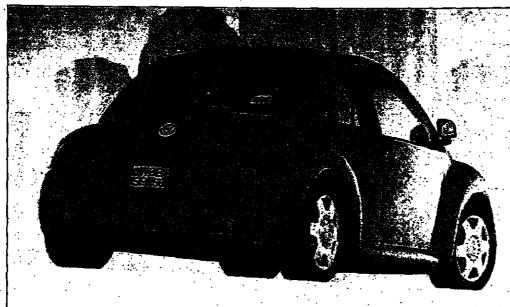
VW's then technical chief insisting it would never go into production. Whereas all other Volkswagens are dour if shapely, Concept One was fun and friendly. People loved it.

And they love it as I drive around Georgia. Young, old, men, women, people who are bored with modern car architecture and its infatuation with amorphous organic shapes or with "aggressive" design. The New Beetle looks friendly and approachable and different, and that's why people love it. Plus, people always like nostalgia. Millions owned one, and remember the Beetle. And if they didn't own one, they watched it on the screen as Herbie, the car that was almost human. That rather summed up the Beetle.

The new one has the Beetleesque shape, but shares nothing with its ancestor. It's pure Golf mechanically - the engine, the suspension, the brakes. There's a 2-litre petrol and a 1.9 turbodiesel model, both front - not rear - mounted.

Behind the wheel, you're aware of being close to your passenger, just as you were in the old Beetle, an upshot of those fake stylised running boards which have dictated a narrower than normal cabin. Yet the windscreen seems miles away. That semicircular Bug shape has demanded a screen that ends far forward, and vast dashboard depth. Yet it also makes for a rear compartment with virtually no headroom, and a tiny and useless boot - although the rear seat does fold forward, helping storage space. The Yanks say that most Bugs will carry no more than two adults or, at most,





mechanical noises are coming from the wrong end of the car. A standard sports exhaust helps give the exhaust extra timbre, but the New Beetle brakes are optional. does not feel like an especially sporty car. It is not meant to. It is an unthreatening car, not a trafficlight tearaway. It is aimed at those

who aren't in a hurry. Build quality seems excellent, a testament to the recently overhauled (and once quality-suspect) Puebla factory in Mexico. There were no rattles and both interior and exterior finish were first rate. The gearchange is smooth and easy (just like a Golf's), and the car handles well. It rides well, too, and is comfortable to bonnet, which falls out of sight. Rear

Performance is lively, even if the although this will come as no shock £14,000 when sales start early in to those used to Golfs. Modern safety features abound, and include dash and side airbags. Anti-lock by then.

> The pleasingly individual dash complements the oddball exterior styling. There's a vast circular speedo right in front, with inset tachometer and fuel level gauges. There is even a little plastic vase on the dash, to hold the ubiquitous flower, although this is probably a retro touch too far.

In fact, the whole thing is a big sop to sentimentality. This car makes no sense, not in a rational way. If you want a car this size for normal, sensible transport, you'd be sit in, even if there's no sign of the better off buying a Golf, which also happens to be cheaper. In Britain, three-quarter visibility is also poor, the New Beetle will cost about

1999. A turbocharged 1.8 litre petrol model will also have joined the range Instead, the Beetle is much more

than just a car. It's as much a fashion accessory as transport; more lifestyle statement than mechanical object on wheels. It will sell because of the way it looks, and the image it conveys, and will be a popular second or third car for those who want something a little different.

It may just be a rebodied, overpriced, PR-hyped Golf in drag, but it's fine to look at and drive. And other motorists will love you for driving it. Road rage and road anger are unlikely to be problems for New Age Bug drivers. Besides, if other drivers do lose their rag, you can al-

Scorpio - the car with a sting in its face

Ford - makers of the UK's most popular cars - had never put a foot wrong - until, as James Ruppert explains, it launched the visually challenged Scorpio

Not always inspiring cars, Fords have always been sensible, reliable and most of all, moffensive.

In the executive sector where the previous Granada had successfully won over the nation's standard equipment and restrained styling, the new Scorpio was suddenly a fish out of water. In fact, the form of aquatic life it most resembled was a guppy. with its rounded rump and a sliver of lights that suggested an in-appropriate American influence.

All Ford was doing was overreacting to industry criticism that most cars had begun to look the same. These days it knows how to make a distinctive model - see the Ford Ka and Puma but back in 1995 the Scorpio was seriously deep-sea weird.

Of course, Ford never allowed the Scorpio to become a disaster, offering big discounts for fleets and rental companies, so it did not lose its core market. Hence there are now lots of used examples around. However, the used car market is a harsh judge of anything too wacky, so prices have never been softer, especially as it is due for replacement.

If you want a large, reliable car, all you really need to know is that the Scorpio is spacious, comfortable, lavishly equipped and cheap. And the best bit is, while you are driving it you don't get to see how ugly it is.

Essentially, the Scorpio is simply a development of the old Granada, but the suspension was reworked for a smoother and quieter ride. At the bottom of the range were 2-litre models, but the more powerful 16-valve version is best suited to hauling that big, ugly body around. Executive was the basic trim; the Ghia added an electric sunroof and alloy wheels; the Ultima added

After 1996, only the less powerful engine survived, but a 2.3litre version joined the range. For economy, you could opt for the 2.5 turbo diesel; those who did not care bought the 2.9 V6, or the middle managers with a ton of 24-valve. Arguably the best is the cavernous estate. At the 1997 Motor Show, Ford revealed a minor face-lift for the Scorpio. But the cosmetic surgery was not drastic enough: it's still ugly.

Because so much of the Scorpio is old Ford Granada technology, it is a safe buy, provided the service history exists and the condition is at least tidy.

Arguably the best value I've seen was a 1996 top-of-the-range 24-valve Ultima at £11,495. Brand new, that would have cost £27,500. The sheer value for money of a car with climate control air-conditioning, memory seats, a multi-play CD etc is overwhelming. The new alternative would be a Ford Escort 1.4LX...

The Great Trade Centre in west London had lots of Scorpios to choose from. 1996 2.0 Scorpios in Ultima trim started at £13,499; a later-model 1996 2.3 was £14,999, A higher-miles 1995 2.0 was £7,999; an estate with the 2.9 engine, £8,999. The Trade Centre, near Slough, was slashing its 1997 2.3 Ultima from £16,699 to £14,299. The Centre Group in Weybridge had 1996 2.3 Ultima estates from £15,995. Ford specialist MJA had 95/96 Scorpios from £11,995. In fact, one of the last places to visit is a Ford dealership, which may not have the choice, or low prices.

Scorpios' high depreciation makes them highly affordable. and that trend is set to continue until vulgarity is back in fashion.

The Great Trade Centre (0181-969 5511); the Trade Centre (01753 773763); the Car Group (01932 820022); MJA (0500 699799)

MY WORST CAR - MILES HARRISON'S BORROWED FORD ESCORT



There are two sorts of cars in despite the best efforts of the radio station manager, can be disgusting. When you drive them. if you hear mechanically unfriendly noises you just hope that the car gets you to back to the station, then keep quiet about the problem because you don't want to get involved.

My first job was local radio in radio. One is the radio car, kept in Leeds. I was on my way back from pristine condition for VIPs. Then Leeds United football club. The car managed to get back to the assumed that it could make it back to the studio on the fumes remaining in the tank. I was on the slip road from the city centre inner ring road in the rush hour when the

> Escort finally stopped. Unfortunately it was plastered in station logos, so there was no mistaking who was responsible for

this tailback. Sheepishly, I scrambled up a nearby bank and traffic report warning drivers about a broken-down car on the inner ring road currently causing a 500-yard, and growing, tailback.

A station engineer asked what the problem was. I lied that the Escort had broken down. When he asked what tools would be useful to get it running again, I

indicated that a good place to start would be a gallon of petrol. That experience taught me ver, ever to lend my car to anyone in the media.

Miles Harrison will commentate for Sky Sports on the Five Nations England vs Wales rugby encounter at Twickenham today. His book on the Lions Tour, 'Best Seat in the House' is published by Aurum Press. He was talking to James Ruppert.

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Potted history

Britain has the richest heritage of historic gardens in the world, but urgently needs more training to support them. Anna Pavord reports on one important scheme

A large ginger tomcat was asleep in a basket on the windowsill of the gardeners' bothy at Cragside, Northumberland. Lunch boxes and plant catalogues covered the wooden table. Ten plants of the season were lined up in jam jars on a shelf, each one carefully labelled with its Latin name and its proper botanical family. This was the course, it isn't. Philanthropists are thin on week's homework for the 18-year-old trainee gardener who had just joined the workforce at Cragside, the extraordinary house and garden that was laid out towards ers has become ever more of a problem. the end of the last century by the armaments manufacturer Sir William Armstrong. It now belongs to the National Trust.

It all seemed deliciously cosy. It lulled me into feeling that everything was still as we imagine it used to be, when young gardeners worked through practical apprenticeships under the guidance of an experienced head gardener and the patronage of a philanthropic owner. But, of the ground these days. Although gardening has never been higher on the national agenda, providing good training for garden-

I went to Cragside to see Alison Pringle, who was 26 when she decided on an abrupt career change, and was swept into

the first of the National Trust's three-year training programmes for gardeners. How did it happen? Alison already had a degree in fine arts and was working as a freelance etcher. "My studio was in a factory unit in a fairly rundown area of Newcastle. I never saw daylight. I just felt it was no way to live. Then by chance I saw this article in Cosmopolitan about women who worked outdoors. 'If only,' I thought."

But nobody could show her how to do it. She already had one degree and didn't want another paper qualification. She wanted to learn by experience, the way garden apprentices used to. She didn't want to ride round on a tractor all day, mowing sports pitches. She wanted more from the job than manual labour. That's when she saw the advertisement for the Trust's training programme, which they call "careership". She was lucky to get in. The Trust can fund only eight students a year, and six of the places are reserved for people under 20. Each student is assigned to a particular garden, carefully chosen to provide a wide range of experience. They are also committed to 10 weeks' study at Bicton College in Devon, where the Trust has arranged courses tailor-made for the kind of work their gardeners are likely to tackle. Ordinary courses in "amenity horaccount of the needs of historic gardens.

"I think the Trust took a gamble on me," says Alison. "I had bright purple hair, extremely long fingernails and luminous trousers." But she has been spectacularly successful in her second career, and is now assistant head gardener at Cragside, responsible for propagating all their plants. By some miracle, she's even managed to hang on to her fingernails, though the hair has calmed down. She didn't want to clash with the summer bedding.

"A culture shock", is how she describes her first months as a trainee. "I had no idea how much was involved - especially with historic gardens. It adds a whole new layer to all the basic things you have to know; historic techniques of gardening, principles of design." All the careership students (at 26. she was relieved that she wasn't the oldest)

went off together to do their block release courses and, in their final year, were encouraged to arrange exchanges between cach other's gardens. "We got paid, and we in, and so have English Heritage, I got the professional qualifications," explains are still big gaps in the network. Alison, "but it was the practical experience that was the key for me on this scheme."

Had the job turned out to be what she hoped? "Oh, far more than I was hoping," she replies. "I love plants, and here I'm responsible for bringing on at least 50,000 plants a year. We don't have much in our budget for buying new plants."

Stoicism is an important qualification for the job, she says. There are so many things outside your control that, as a gardener, you have to learn to accept. And patience. "I fail down there," she confesses. "I'm always poking at my seed pans, wanting to hurry the seeds on." Most of all, she acknowledges the contribution of Cragside's head gardener, Andrew Sawyer. "It's a huge commitment on their part to take on a student. They have to remember to involve them in everything that's going on. It's up to them to make sure the student gets as wide a spread of experience as possible."

So, as far as Alison is concerned, the Trust's careership scheme has been a success. But each student costs the Trust the programme, but they don't have the when fully fledged, they might move out Bodmin, Comwall PL30 4DE. Training money. They would like private owners to of the public sector into private gardens. starts each September.

join them in offering placements for trainee gardeners, but there have been few offers. The Historical Royal Palaces have joined in, and so have English Heritage, but there

Despite the extraordinary richness of our historic parks and gardens (the Trust alone owns 160), there is no properly funded centre of excellence devoted to their history, care and upkeep. There is no central clearing-house that Alison could use to guide her towards what she wanted to do. The Heritage Lottery Fund has voted a generous £57m towards an urban parks initiative, and the money is badly needed; parks are vital lungs in Britain's cities. But there is nowhere for the people responsible for Britain's parks to go, to get advice about the best way to spend their windfall. There are no courses tailored to provide gardeners with as good a grasp of the historic significance of urban parks as they have of turf care or tractor maintenance.

Parks have suffered badly in the wake "compulsory competitive tendering" (CCT), which focuses people's minds on a figure at the end of a balance sheet. But there are many different ways of doing

The view was that wherever they went, the training would not be wasted.

But a requirement to provide similar opportunities for training has never been written into the park contracts that local councils put out for tender. Often the contracts go to landscapers based hundreds of miles away from the parks they contract to look after. You can't put a figure on the local pride, and the local distinctiveness, that come from employing local people to look after their own landscapes. But the loss is obvious to everybody.

Recognising the gap left after the collapse of the parks apprenticeships, the Trust has tailored a scheme ideally suited to this country's vast inheritance of historic gardens, but can't find the money to expand it. The Professional Gardeners Guild, in a separate initiative, also sponsors one traince gardener who spends a year in each of three different gardens. Beyond that, a great black hole looms.

We are constantly told that we have the richest heritage of gardens on earth. But who is going to care for them, come the

sums. Before CCT, the parks provided the For details about the National Trust's cabest practical training on offer for young reership scheme, send an sae to John McKen-



Alison Pringle at Cragside, top and above Photos Will Walker/North News





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CUTTINGS

"Why do you have it in so for poor old Agnes?" asks Brian Glover, of London SW12, I wrote recently that I'd heaved my recalcitrant 'Agnes' rose on to the bonfire when, after years and years of waiting, it had failed to give me a single flower.

"I planted a bush at least 15 years ago in my mother's garden in windswept Merseyside," he continues. "It's in rather a thankless part of the garden (I was younger then, and crueller), dank soil, competition from an ancient hawthorn hedge, not much sunlight and still, twice a year, it puts on a creditable show of blossom. As a passionate gardener without a garden, I travel up there almost every month. and usually catch its flowering.

"Its first flowering is quite early (end of May, early June) and the most profuse. The flowers, though not large, are of the most beautiful colour and have a raspberryish scent which I have not met in any other rose. Its second blooming is usually in August to September, when the flowers are fewer, but bigger and just as scented.

"The shrub does indeed grow lankily (not helped by being sun-starved, I suspect) and it throws suckers. When it all gets too much I hack it right down like other rugosa roses and it springs back, maybe missing one of its bloomings, but never seriously bothered. It has probably been fed two or three times in its life (I must try to remember to do it this spring). It never

gets any diseases (the rugosa blood, I dare say) so doesn't need spraying.

"All in all, I'd say 'Agnes' has proved her worth. I got her from David Austin's nursery. Maybe I've just been lucky, but I felt I should write in defence of a much-maligned rose."

The latest edition of 'Tree News' unravels a mystery that has puzzled Janeites for some time. It occurs in Emma, when, on the day before the fatal Box Hill picnic, Emma visits Donwell Abbey and finds the orchard in blossom. Nothing odd in that, you might think, except that Austen makes clear this was "almost midsummer". Euan Nisbet, professor of geology at the University of London, has discovered that this is not as strange as it seems. He checked weather records in an early book on meteorology, The Climate of London, by Luke Howard, and discovered that the spring of 1814, the year Austen started to write Emma, was exceptionally cold. In the late, cold spring of 1996, apple trees were still in bloom in early June. The spring of 1814, apparently, was even later and colder, so blossom may not have appeared until midsummer. Austen, always a stickler for accuracy, has not made a boob. Tree News is published twice a year by the Tree Council, 51 Catherine Place, Lon-

Coffee connects a series of events arranged by the Royal Botanic Garden,

don SW1E 6DY (0171-828 9928).

Edinburgh, between Tuesday and Friday next week. A free exhibition in the Caledonian Hall (Tues-Fri, 11am-3.30pm) includes exhibits from coffee traders and importers, with tastings going on all day. In the lecture theatre on Tuesday, Harvey Grieve talks about the subtleties of growing and roasting the bean, while RBG guides are on hand to point out coffee plants growing in the botanic garden's glasshouse. This event starts at 3pm and tickets cost £10. For information on "Coffee Connections", contact Sharon Kirk at the Royal Botanic Garden (0131-552 71871).

Kew's annual orchid festival opens

today with thousands of spectacular orchids on display in the Princess of Wales conservatory. The theme of this year's display is "Islands of Enchantment", the title drawing attention to the many endangered orchids that grow in islands round the world and the work being done to ensure their survival. In the micropropagation laboratories at Kew, scientists have learnt how to clone rare orchids, to protect species from extinction. There are 25,000 different kinds of wild species orchid, and the Kew collection is recognised as the best in the world. The festival runs until 29 March, with study days for beginners on 17 and 26 March and flower-arranging demonstrations on 5 and 11 March.

Anna Pavord



Reg. Addison, DPA Diseas Utd. 25 Hollantings Road, South Woodhorn Feeter, Ch.

Paint your own monogram

Ever thought you could do better at designing a dinner service than many of the professionals? Sally Staples checked out a china-painting class - and found it was fun

hibition where stern-looking, grey-haired ladies demonstrated how to cover a teacup with delicate flowers in a series of deft brush-strokes. The spectacle was riveting, petal or leaf. Their hands never wobbled, the colour never smudged, and the observer might have concluded that these women had either been practising their art for decades, or had been born with an extraordinary talent for steady precision.

With this in mind, I wondered what kind of people would have the courage to enrol on a course in china-painting. Would even the beginners display an innate artistry? Would the first week's handiwork look good enough to sell?

The atmosphere turned out to be far from intimidating. The students were all women, and most of the class were chatty housewives with varying degrees of artistic ability. They were there to have some fun, and not even the tutor, Hazel Faithful, wanted to paint petals on teacups with that robotic rapidity I had remembered.

"We try to aim for a more modern approach to china-painting," she said. "A lot of people come on this course because they want to do something practical without getting too messy. Some of them have a background in painting, which can help - but

Quite often the students want to paint

My image of china-painting stemmed from a set of dinner plates with a design or motif. a visit, long ago, to an arts and crafts ex- They want to get a result quite quickly, and take something home. I try to stop them going ahead too fast, so that they acquire some basic skills first."

Each week, Hazel gives a demonstration because each stroke formed a perfect on some aspect of china-painting, then the students work on their own projects while she goes round the class giving advice and

On my visit she was teaching them the importance of mixing paint. This comes in powder form, in small sachets weighing about 10 grams each. It is used sparingly and mixed with turps and differing amounts of clove and lavender oil, depending on the texture of paint required.

The paints have a cadmium or selenium content and some colours such as pink, red and purple contain a gold element, which puts the price up to around £11.50 per sachet. On that basis, it is clearly cheaper to start experimenting with blues and

Hazel explained that the rules of mixing these paints are different from those governing watercolours. For instance, mixing blue and yellow will invariably produce a muddy brown, rather than green. The colours used on china may also need to be fired in a kiln at different temperatures; it is important, when using a combination of and covered four cups and saucers in no colours, to know what the firing require-

One of the most skilled in the class was



of dinner plates. She spent the morning painting a green stem with leaves on to two plates, which were then left to be fired in the kiln. In the next class she would add

different-coloured flowers to the stems. Mireille Robertson had a set of cups and saucers that she was painting cobalt blue, using a sponge instead of a brush to achieve a marbled effect. Untroubled by any intricate design, she worked speedily.

Peggy Powell-Brett, who is in her second year of china-painting, said she still gets

Marsha Arrad, who was working on a set neurotic about everything she does. In fact, her work is impressively accurate. That day she was tracing the outline of a kingfisher on to a plain white plate, and had begun to mix colours to paint the bird's breast and

> "I started off painting ashtrays and jugs, bowls and mugs, and giving them as pre-sents," she said. "For Christmas I gave my daughter a set of dinner plates. It is a satisfying way of producing presents."

Muriel Lasry was working on a clown design, which she planned to paint on to a plate for her three-year-old daughter.

from the household chores, and a chance to spend two hours doing something for myself," she said. "Mostly I make things for my children; when they are older they will have a collection of mugs and plates they

The basic materials for china-painting are minimal: a bottle of turps, some surgical gloves, natural sponges, brushes, palette knives, a quill pen and a wipe-out pen for the inevitable mistakes. Hazel has a good stock of paint and china available for students to buy. A 10-inch white dinner plate costs £2.85, but she says that bargains can also be picked up in many stores.

What most of these women enjoyed about china-painting was having an endproduct, and not needing to be an artistic genius to produce it. As one student said; while labouring away with the sponge technique: "When this plate is finished I shall use it for little cakes and tarts - whatever it looks like. With luck the next one may be better."

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Hazel Faithful's 10-week courses at Kensington and Chelsea College, London (0171-573 5333) cost between £50 and £60. She also offers private courses in London (0171-253)

GAMES

This is the concluding part of Charis Maslanka's survey, begun last week. (See key at end for noise and game-rage ratings.)

The simplicity and versatility of the word game Scrabble have enabled it to sweep the board, selling more than 100 million copies in over 120 countries since the 1930s. Books are written on it and its many forms attest to its popularity. I once even saw a sad character playing it on his own on a train. This Travel Scrabble de Luxe (Mattel, 2-4 players, aged 8+ years, RRP £15, would have cheered him up at least as much as a playmate. It is compact and can be folded away with the tiles locked in place and so is ideal for travellers. (Rating: p. Z)

I suspect Anagram (competitive word play, 2-8 players of all ages, Oxford Games Ltd, RRP £5.95) may not prove everyone's cup of tea, though it is enjoyable enough if you can spell well, love anagrams and have a competitive streak, but it's certainly not a game for dyselvics! (Rating: p. Z)

If in Tom Brown's School Days you found yourself siding with the bullies, Power (2-4 players aged 10 or over) might just be your thing. The instructions are complicated but become clear as the game progresses, the object being to attack other countries and capture their flags utilising all the air power, tanks, ships and personnel at your disposal. In the battlehardened opinions of Gary (12), John (10) and Dan (10) it was their favourite game. (Rating: ff. v)

WHAT TO PLAY ON COLD WINTER EVENINGS CHRIS MASLANKA

Yali (strategy game for two, Falcon, about £19.99) is an engaging and successful balancing game for all the family. Ball-bearings are loaded into a seesaw structure which reacts counter-intuitively; the way in which it tips determines the next move. Gary and Julie (both 12) played it as a game of chance with little insight into what made it tip. Their parents continued long after the children had gone to bed in the hope of deducing the strategy that ensures a win and graduation to a higher level of play. Curiously addictive and an all-round favourite. (Rating: p, Z)

Spite (Board and dice game for 2-6 players or teams of more than 6, Lagoon Games, RRP £9.99), despite its name, proved hugely enjoyable. Players gradually collect enough counters to cover the letters of the word SPITE but also get a chance to demolish the work of others. For adults it is fun and emotion-releasing to the point of being therapeutic, but a word of caution: younger children can become quite upset when ganged up on. I had visions of Enfield's Old Gits coming to blows over this one. (Rating: f, vv)

Mancala (Lagoon Games, £9.99, board game of strategy for two players aged 7 to adult) is a version of the ancient game known as Mankala'h as played in the coffee shops of Egypt, or as Pallanguli as played by the Tamils of Southern India. The seeds have been replaced by glass stones in this beautifullypackaged coffee-table version and it is a great game to gossip

and relaix to as the advantage veers from one player to the

Lager-laddishness is too often a celebration of pre-verbal behaviour, so Booze Cruise (trivia based, board game, Lagoon Games RRP £19.99) came as a pleasant surprise. Although the aim is to rack up five brewery visits, the questions on drink, travel, culture and trivia are no pushover. For example: (1) Which is the only national flag that has a map of the country melted chocolate bar in his pocket after passing a magnetron in 1945? For answers see below.

A selection of the drinks named in the game were served as we played so I only remember starting the game. Will suit those characters who take their drink seriously (those who can only direct you to places by means of the pubs that lie along the route). Only give to alcoholics anonymously. (Rating: f, v)

Chronology: (2-6 players aged 7 or over. Spear's RRP £20) A reminiscence game, perhaps better suited to the chronologically challenged, intent on reliving the past, or those with an interest in history. The game stretches back to 1066, which should be one in the eye for other reminiscence games. Was "Love me Do" recorded before or after JFK was assassinated? (For answer see 3 below.) (Rating: f, v)

The desire to murder house guests and family can be sublimated by a Murder Mystery Game. Unlike Nativity plays

these all have different plots and you don't know from the outset how they will end up. Murder à la Carte's The Brie, The Bullet & the Black Cat (10-12 consenting adults) is a fantasy role play game set in 1942 Casablanca. Participants with wonderfully ridiculous names - Cherie Boot, Countess Bogov Seamus O'Hack - have to deduce which one of them killed The Black Cat, France's greatest mime artist. The set includes invitations, party plan with suggested menus, character booklets on it? And (2) What was invented after Percy Spencer found a and a cassette to give the guests motive and motivation: a failsafe way to spend a hilarious evening. (Rating: ff. v)

When the dust has settled from all the socialising you may need to re-centre yourself in solitude by ensconcing yourself in a comfortable chair to contemplate, as did the monks of old, the knot-work in The Celtic Knot Puzzle (Oxford Games, £6.95) or, if you lean more to the East, the hundreds of patterns obtainable from the seven tiles in 300 Tangrams (Puzzle and Book, age 8 years to adult: Lagoon Games, RRP £10). Don't worry; long before you've exhausted all the possible ways of configuring the seven tiles it will be time to buy more games for next Christmas. (Ratings: p, Z)

ANSWERS: 1) Cyprus; 2) The microwave oven; 3) The Beatles hit came out in 1962, the year before JFK was killed. Noise levels: p - quiet, f - noisy, ff - disturb the neighbours. Risk of game rage: Z - almost irritatingly inoffensive v - tread curefully; vv - have a Relate counsellor on hand.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY ON VALENTINE'S DAY

Dame Barbara Cartland, 96, writer

I've always played a lot of tennis, of course, and a little golf. And I rode a lot at one time. Not any more:

These days, I write a book every fortnight. My secretary types it out, and then she reads the chapter back before we start the next one. You must tell people that, because I've told one or two men about it, and they've all said, "What a good idea, I've never thought of that."

I started writing when we came to live in London. A friend of mine said: "Look, I've just started working for Lord Beaverbrook. You are out dancing every night, and if you give me a paragraph for the

newspaper, I will give you five shillings." Eventually, Lord Beaverbrook sent for me. Of course, along with other men I had met, he fell in love with me straight away. Every day I had to go to the Hyde Park Hotel, where he had his office, and show him what I'd written. And he showed me how to

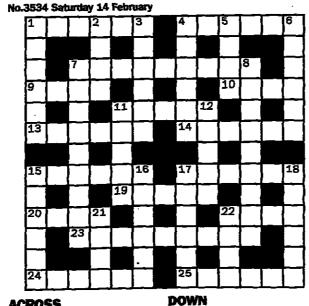
write for a newspaper. Before we arrived in London, my mother had said: "As you've got two younger brothers still at school, we must spend the holidays in the country. We went back to Worcestershire, where we had lived before, and rented a small house near Bredon. One day the elder of my brothers said: "You must be very quiet, because I have to write an essay for school," So I said, "I will write a book."

The whole family said, "Ha, ha, you will never finish it." But I did. It went into masses of editions, and was such a success that I thought I'd go on writing books. This was quite unusual, because in those days, a lassy didn't soil her lily-white hands with

'St Valentine' and 'The Scent of Romance Original' are Dame Barbara's signature scents, containing a high proportion of natural flower essences. They are available by mail order from The Perfumers' Guild, price £16 each. Details: 01923-260502. Either will complement a reading of 'In Love in Lucca' (£3.99 from Mandarin)

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CONCISE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Battled (6) Blows (6) Kitchen gadgets (3-6) Old Peruvian (4) 10 Compass bearing (4)
- Sing repetitiously (5) Fortified wine (6) 14 Elaborate (6) 15 Of the stars (6)
- 17 Seller (6) 20 Line on graph (4) Those in favour (4) 23 Gloomy (9)
- 24 Guard (6) 25 Meagre in quantity or quality (6)

Greek goddesses of

- vengeance (6) Senile (4) Irritable (6) Japanese robe (6) Monster (4) Determine (6) Odd (9) Time of one's youth (5,4)
- Dairy product (5) 12 Attempted (5) 15 Counting frame (6) 16 Delightful (6) Fine parchment (6) 18 Prayer beads (6)

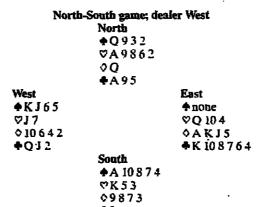
21 Hit by bullet (4)

22 Continent (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Quod. 3 Wrangles (Quadrangles), 9 Infer, 10 Sternum, 11 Kit, 13 Manifesto, 14 Adroit, 16 Always, 18 Brilliant, 20 Egg, 22 Tropics, 23 Label, 25 Royalist, 26 Ugly. DOWN: 1 Quick, 2 Off, 4 Rising, 5 Needful, 6 Landscape, 7 Summons, 8 Pram, 12 Territory, 14 Arbiter, 15 III-will, 17 Kansas, 19 Till, 21

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON



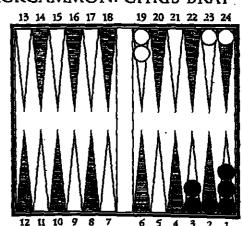
Over the past week or so I have described a number of good things that were done in the Macallan International Pairs, so I suppose that I ought to redress the balance by giving a bad one. Tactfully, I shall preserve the anonymity of the players.

After two passes, East opened One Club and South found a vulnerable overcall of One Spade (!). West bid One No-trump and North made an unassuming cue-bid of Two Clubs (agreeing spades and showing the high-card values for a raise to at least the Two level). East bid Three Clubs and a relieved South was able to pass, as did West. North now launched into Four Diamonds - a splinter bid, showing diamond shortage - and East doubled. Again South was able to pass, but North was not finished yet (remember his initial pass) and he made another cue bid. Four Hearts. Now South was compelled to bid Four Spades and West's double (a dubious move) ended the auction.

West led #Q against Four Spades doubled and, after winning with dummy's ace, I think that most, if not all, of my first-year students would have led Q, preparing for a cross-ruff. This seems to lead to an easy 10 tricks, for what else could West have for his bidding but a hand that included \$KJ.6.5?

Declarer's actual play of ducking a heart all round at trick two baffled both the audience and the commentators, and when he later cashed A ... well, all I can say is that he managed the rest of the play well enough to escape for one down. But, with the Butler scoring method in force, this proved a very costly outing.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Time to eat humble pie. The first problem in the Christmas Quizshould have been published with the diagram above. The correct solution to this problem is that Black should double and White should drop, as published last week. Unfortunately, in writing the quiz I accidentally moved the third man on Black's one-point to his three point. This small difference is enough to change the answerfrom a drop to a take. I am indebted to several of my colleagues from the Double Fives club for pointing out the error of my ways. As a result I am awarding an additional prize and this is on its way to Michael Crapper of London SW18.

The main difference that the error in the diagram makes is that in the position above Black no longer wastes a roll on sequences where he rolls a number containing a '2' on both of his first two rolls, except if one of those rolls is 21. This small change makes quite a difference in equity. In the position above White's equity if he takes is -2.17. With the third man on the three-point his equity rises to -1.44. Thus the position above is a narrow pass, the quiz problem as published a clear take.

The lesson for everyone here is that in bear-offs very small differences in the position can lead to very different cube actions and it is only by objective analysis that you can come close to the right answer. Over the board you will get some of them wrong but with practise and experience you will get better.

Hugh Sconyers, an American analyst, has produced a CD which gives exact bear-off equities for all bear-offs where both players have nine men or fewer and all men are within the home boards. This is an invaluable analysis tool and although \$99 is not cheap it is worth the investment if you want to study endgame bear-offs seriously.

The CD is available from Carol Joy Cole, 3719, Greenbrook Lane, Flinz, MI 48507-1400, USA,



The route of eagles and egotists

Continuing his series on great short railway journeys,

Matthew Brace takes the train from Fort William to Mallaig

They are a tough breed up in Fort William, withstanding over the years several invasions and skirmishes, to say nothing of the atrocious weather that lashes this part of the Scottish Highlands. The town's latest battle has been to save the Deerstalker Express, the Caledonian sleeper train from London.

As Charles Moore, owner of a local guesthouse, explained: "It's our link with the south. If we want to go on holiday, Heathrow and Gatwick offer more than Glasgow or Edinburgh. We just jump on the sleeper and we're in Euston before we know it."

Thanks to the efforts of Mr Moore and friends the sleeper is still running, but they were not the first train campaigners to fight to retain services from Fort William. The track to Mallaig on the coast was under threat during Dr Beeching's time, but was saved then, too, by solid local support.

I and the elderly woman who boarded the 8.45am last week were grateful to them. We were the only two passengers on the train. She was going on from Mallaig on the twohour ferry to the tiny island of Eigg, where she originally comes from and where her daughter still lives.

We were riding a historic route. A railway from the Scottish interior to the Atlantic coast was a dream for train buffs for decades, no more so than when the West Highland line reached Fort William in 1894. One reason was to carry the fish stocks from Mallaig to markets inland, but the egos of the railbuilders must also have played a major part.

Eventually a combination of public funds from Westminster coffers and the resources of private landowners meant that the line could be funded. However, another seven years of hard labour were needed, building viaducts, tunnels and cuttings through heavy rock and peaty soil, before the first train rolled into the dockside station at Mallaig.

You leave Fort William heading north east but the track soon swings round and runs west, with the bulk of Ben Nevis glaring down at you from behind the town. The line passes the ruins of Inverlochy Castle and crosses the Kiver Lochy, where it emplies into Loch Linnhe. At Banavie the train uses a 100-year-old swing-bridge across the Caledonian Canal, which is mysteriously drained at the moment. Looking right here you should be able to make out Neptune's Staircase, a series of eight locks leading to the higher sections of the canal.

After Corpach (or A'Chopaich in Gaelic, meaning "place of the bodies"), from where the bodies of dead Highland heroes were shipped to the holy island of Iona for burial, the train passes the Loch Eil Outward Bound centre, and then it is on to Glenfinnan.

These deserted glens are the haunt of golden eagles which soar high above the track searching for prey. Some are so powerful that they can carry off a small deer. They are hard to spot, but the station staff back at Fort William had assured me that they were out there somewhere.

The Glenfinnan Monument, topped with a statue of Bonnie Prince Charlie, was put up in 1815 on what is said to have been the spot where his standard was unfurled in 1745 as a rallying-point for the clans. You get a marvellous view of the monument and the small settlement of Glenfinnan from the 100ft- high viaduct that the train passes over before stopping at Glenfinnan station. If you are not going all the way to Mallaig, this is a good place to hop off and explore. A museum here offers a quick Scottish history lesson, which you can mull over as the train proceeds to Ari-

After Arisaig station the track swings north along the Atlantic coastline to the beautiful white beaches of Morar, from where the Inner Hebridean islands of Rhum, Muck and Eigg are visible. Rhum is the most distinctive, with its lofty mountains rising up

out of the sea. When you arrive in Mallaig you will doubtless be met by a chorus of giant seag-ulls. The station is in the heart of the small town and a short walk from the harbour, ferry terminal and the Fishermen's Mission. While taking in the beauty, spare a thought for the exhausted labourers who sweated to bring to life the dream of a Highland railway to the sea.

On the footplate

When to go: Four trains a day Monday to Saturday, one on Sunday (to 23 May). Between 22 May and 6 June, watch out for the Highland Festival, a wide variety of events across the Highlands and Islands centred on rail journeys such as Fort William-Mallaig (01463 719000)

How much: adult standard return £11.50, children £5.75, adult day return £10.50, chil-

Who to call: ScotRail 0345 484950, or (for disabled travellers) 01397 703791.



good, four wheels better: quad bikes ere originally designed for quickly – but driving them in mad, muddy circles is much Photographs: Penny Kendali

Mud in the blood

Nostalgie de la boue? Then look no further. Quad biking is the sport for glorying in mud. And minimal driving experience is required you just roll up and roar off. Eric Kendall sits tight, revs up, and takes the fat-wheeled route to the open fields

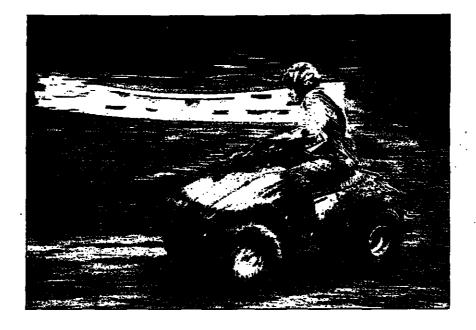
A mud-plugging, high-speed contradiction in terms, the quad bike isn't a bike at all, but a fourwheeled, go-anywhere machine. With the seat and handlebars of a small motorbike, and four very fat little wheels shod with knobbly tyres, its practical purpose is for crossing farmland quickly and with minimal impact. But who cares; its impractical purpose - for driving madly round muddy circuits is much more fun.

Speeding over rough ground is what it's all about. There's lots of feedback through the handlebars, but not much control when the going gets slippery. When you know it's going wrong, all you can do is back off the power and sit tight. On tirmer ground, it's just a great chance to drive the way you would like to on a road but can't because of other traffic, or daren't because you value your

The great advantage of a quad biking circuit is that, as on the M25, everything goes round the track in the same direction. Unlike the situation on the M25, you can reasonably come within a mudsplat of other riders, though touching the rear wheels of the bike ahead is a bad idea that sends you rearing skywards, and earns an official warning for dangerous play. Even without such antics, the bouncy nature of the ride can be hilarious for both rider and spectator, to whom larger quaddies look like jump jockeys hunched over the wrong

kind of steed. Though quad bikes have more wheels than a motorbike - to aid balance under trying conditions - the simplest ones have less in the way of complicated controls such as clutch and gears, so that anyone can just roll up and roar off. The throttle tends to be a simple matter of all or nothing, and sometimes you can even forget the brakes, which it's a much faster game, and the cornering adhesion of four wide tyres makes rolling it as easy as falling off a quad bike.

You can do only so much whizzing around in circles without an objective, and quad bikes come into their own in competition - the kind of "to the curve and away from the area of maximum grip, death" duel that develops between firm friends as you can suddenly find yourself going nowhere fast,



engines and a phantom Murray Walker screaming hyperbole into their helmeted ears.

After a few warm-up laps, the start is a nervy, high-revving affair with no quarter given. The bikes squirt off the line sluggishly (no one could accuse them of being quick off the mark) in a wheelspinning fight for the best path. Hogging the only navigable pair of ruts into the first hill is likely to establish an unassailable position, and will certainly shower the pursuing pack with wheel-spun mud - which is at least half the point of the exercise only make you slide when it's muddy. In the dry, for rugby players who are missing their weekend

Only skulduggery from behind or an error under pressure by the front rider is likely to change the outcome. Overcooking a fast bend is a sure way to blow it: drifting inexorably out of the optimum soon as they see a chequered flag or hear buzzing wheels spinning, back end snaking and a stream

of riders hurtling by. Too much power into a tight bend is even worse, taking you right off the track, with the bike ploughing onwards regardless of where you steer. At this point, neither braking nor praying will help.

The finer points of the game come quickly to most people. Within a couple of laps you'll be bouncing on your seat for extra traction, sitting right back to get the weight over the driving wheels, tact with the ground. You may only be in some (or old trainers) are essential.

forest in Wales, but in your mind's eye you're ascending the podium, being garlanded and sprayed with champagne, having gloriously taken the World Quad Biking Championships, putting Britain right back where it belongs in motorsport - exactly the kind of lapse in concentration that can lead to the wrong line through a boggy dip, a squeichy grind to a halt, and the humiliation of "the man" coming to tow you out, long after the

Quadding essentials

Most quad biking outfits use simple machines: there's a throttle lever on the handlebars to make tomatic transmission and a lever beside your right leg with which to select reverse if it all becomes too dull simply going around forwards. There are also more powerful, four-wheel-drive versions, which few members of the public have the selfcontrol to handle safely round a track.

Quad bikes are the machines whose distant drone could rain somebody's weekend, so circuits tend to be miles from the nearest habitation. Acorn Activities (01432 830083) runs a new, purpose-built course at a woodland site in Herefordshire and also has locations in Shropshire and Wales; they can provide a complete package, including quality accommodation near each of their sites. Rob Island Country Crafts & Leisure (01608 650413) operates in the Cotswolds, and KCS Sport (01832 273134) can organise quad biking countrywide.

Helmets should always be provided; check that overalls are also available, or wear very old and leaning out round corners to improve con- clothes, particularly in muddy conditions. Boots

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN ...

Ever wanted to query the Aristotelian universe, or ask Isaac Newton about his fluxions? If so, then the Kent Festival of Science is for you. After some idle chit-chat with visiting scientists Galileo, Newton and Einstein (all looking pretty good for their age, it must be said), you can engage in a multitude of interactive scientific displays and experiments. For example, test your sporting potential with a Batak board.

make a Jurassic jelly, and then relax by gazing at the stars in an inflatable planetarium. Kent Festival of Science, Canterbury



College, New Dover Road, Canterhury, Kent. 18-19 February. Admission charges: adults £5.50, children £4.50. For more information, call 01707 283008.



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Fabulous Butcher Boy

Like the central character in his latest film, Neil Jordan would rather not grow up. Nick Hasted asked him why

IT WAS the voice Neil Jordan recognised first. Insistently innocent, ultimately terrible, it was a voice he couldn't have invented, but it suited him like skin. It was the voice of the Butcher Boy, Francie Brady, a voice heard first in the head of Irish writer Patrick McCabe. The Butcher Boy was his novel. and Jordan didn't want to direct it. But when he started to work on its screenplay, he found he had no choice. The voice wouldn't leave him. He'd grown up hearing it, after all. "It's the voice of rural Ireland," he says, "the surreal pleasure in the ordinary you used to find there. I grew up in Dublin, not the country. But I knew that child's voice so well,"

Jordan is sitting in the Soho office where he began his Butcher Boy. He talks quietly but with an even rhythm, looking out of the window absently. He's been around a long time, but his magical, complicated visions haven't wavered. There are sickly-sweet sensations in Night in Tunisia, the 1976 collection of short stories which made his young name, which linger still, attitudes in his first, impressionistic novel, The Past, which surface in the sweep of Michael Collins. All his films are dreams, false memories. The sensuous fairytale landscape of The Company of Wolves seeps into the London of The Crying

The Butcher Boy may be the first time the source of those dreams has been reached. It's set in the Ireland of the early 1960s. Its young boy, Francie, talks to the Virgin Mary and to aliens, to fish in the river and to his best friend. It's an imaginative world so rich that, when his best friend abandons him, it bursts its banks, bloodily drown- side time in a way, a preserved ing the "real" world around him as he seeks vengeance on his neighbours. It's the Ireland It was a world of more than

Neil Jordan grew up in. remember that mental atmosrealities that had nothing to do with the world around you. You were told that God spoke to you personally. When I was a child, I spent half my time in a world that was not real at all. I remember being told at school that when God wanted priests, you just heard his voice. He said, 'I'll choose you', and there was nothing you could do about it. hard to remember it exactly

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Neil Jordan: 'It's a story of repression of emotion, of cultural deprivation, of people who can't even say they love each other

in case I heard that voice saying, 'Neil'. It was like being connected to another world. These things are very real to a child. Ireland wasn't really penetrated by the outside world until the late Sixties. It was a place outworld. It was a world of madness, actually."

religion. Francie's acquaintance "One of the reasons I want- with the Virgin Mary is no ed to do the movie was to rein- more real to him than the vent that world," he says. "I American horror comics he dephere so well, the mixture of in-films he sees. Francie makes no story of cultural deprivation, it's around in my Robin Hood cosnocence and savagery, the distinction He's lost in a world a story of people who can't even tume. And then you end up in at church, you were told about church's imaginative realities could be transferred to Dracumembers, "stuff you saw on

"When the Virgin Mary appears in the film, I thought about using a theremin, so she'd sound like a spaceship landing. You tend to live in that world when you're a kid. It's

"I wandered around for two now, and I don't want to go on cence ruins him. It's this per- and the stuff coming out of him years with my hands on my ears about it. I don't want to car-sonal suppression, this despericature that time. I didn't want to in the film."

The character whom Francie most resembles is the boy in Volker Schlöndorff's film of Günter Grass's The Tin Drum. But where that child stops growing, standing for the suppressed horror of the Nazi Germany he's born into, Irish Francie seems to swell with the represthe id of Ireland, freezing at the Sixties' start.

they're dead. That's very true of the Ireland I know. But it's true la, To The Twilight Zone," he re- of other countries, too. Look at the United States. No matter how many therapists you go to see, they don't teach you how to deal with your own feelings."

Francie himself represses almost nothing, except the desire to grow up. He keeps his child's world of games and dreams pristine, until his inno-

ation, that Jordan identifies with most deeply of all. "He ac- bastard!' It's down-home rural tually refused to believe that his stuff. I wasn't like that. I grew world of childhood certainties would end," he says with ani- read and I scribbled." mation, "I remember feeling that so clearly. We grew up near a big old Guinness estate that attachment to boyhood. It's no went to ruin, so when I was a wonder that, in all his dealings kid I was in its trees every day, in the compromised, "adult" I'd be Robin Hood. I rememsions of his town. It's as if he's ber when kids' tastes began to hardly to have been touched. He change at 10 or 11, when they didn't want to play any more. I "It is a story of repression of remember not wanting to do vours, or the science-fiction emotion," Jordan agrees, "It's a that. I just wanted to run release of The Crying Game gave

> say 'Where have they all gone?'. Was he like the boy Francie in other ways? "The boy who plays him looks the spitting image of me when I was that age," he chuckles. "His face is so huge! But he's from rural Ireland, and kids grow up pretty fast there. I thought the language in the script was so bad he might be upset, but he said, 'No bother'. So he starts acting,

was so extraordinary I had to ask him to stop - 'Ya spermy little up in the suburbs of Dublin. I

In the decades since, Jordan has never completely lost that world of Hollywood, he seems still thinks of himself as a marginal character, just as he did when I first met him, before the

him his first Hollywood success. He's since made Interview with the Vampire and Michael Collins, major releases. Surely he's been tempted, along the way, to change his nature?

"I just want to make independent films," he says, "The Butcher Boy is a Warner Brothers movie, so the conversation is absurd. But whether it's a small movie set in Ireland or London or a big studio movie, I want to make it with the same spirit, the same freedoms.

The Butcher Boy is released on Friday 20 February.

A WEEK IN THE ARTS DAVID LISTER

SOME SCORN has been contemporaries had a youth-Préscott because he decided, was now gone. after his dousing at The Brits. to stay doggedly on so that he pop composers seem rooted Saints, the cynics say, he er really understood why. In might have redeemed at least no other musical form, from a little street cred for New opera to jazz, are writers re-Labour. But Fleetwood Mac?

As it happens, I'm with Prescott on this one. From where I sat at last Monday's And even if they find the neushow, Fleetwood Mac gave roses and occasional joys of the best set not by a whisker middle age inappropriate, but by a mile, and the Lon- why can't the pop composers don Arena can rarely have seen so many people of all ages up and boogie-ing as during that all too brief 15 minutes or so. The state of middle-aged

rock, even for those bands that do not possess the everethereal Stevie Nicks, remains reasonably healthy as far as live performance goes. What is more puzzling, and a lot more interesting, is the writing The Stones new album is actually rather good, but does not contain a true classic. Paul Simon's new musical is his worst album ever; Paul McCartney's latest signals a renaissance, but he also has not really delivered for years. Pete Townshend and Ray Davies, writers of English eccentricity, whose songs captured both the optimistic spirit and the neuroses of an era, seem to have given up.

It's a massive irony that live performance, which was supposed to limit the lifespan of rock 'n' rollers, still sees the big names playing big arenas. Yet composing, which makes no demands on waist or hairlines, finds them want-Who once told me that be was disappointed that all pop composers can deal with young love, but none had tackled the subject of middleaged angst. He was particularly disappointed, he added, that The Who's composer, Pete Townshend, had not tackled the subject, a subject that would have appeared made for him. Townshend in turn told me that he and his

poured on poor old John ful energy in the Sixties which

It's true that most rock and could watch Fleetwood Mac. in their first subject matter, Had he hung on wet and fu- find it unsuitable and virtually rious for Shola Ama or All throw in the towel. I've nevdundant in their middle years.

They are often on the verge of their greatest works. simply continue with the subject matter of their youth? There should be no reason why Paul McCartney couldn't write "Penny Lane" now. But somehow we don't expect him to, and he doesn't expect himself to either



I think there is a sense among the writers that the medium is no longer appropriate for them, leading to a sense of insecurity. That struck me when I received a phone call recently from a polite chap saying he ran a band, it was about to go on ing. Roger Daltrey of The a tour and could I give them a plug? Which little garage outfit was this, I wondered wearily? "We're called Fairport Convention," he said helofully. The architects of British electric folk should be a lot more sure of themselves. So should all our middle-aged songwriters. As far as street cred goes, a great new song is worth more than a dozen jugs of water poured over a Cabinet minister.

TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION



Actress Emily Watson talks about the unusual men in her life

PLUS:

- Love and duty the Duke of Windsor's own photographs of the abdication crisis
- Calvin Klein exclusive a peek at the latest collection with Kate Moss and Christy Turlington
- The humble British cheese-and-pickle sandwich takes Paris by storm

THE WEEK ON RADIO ROBERT HANKS

STANLEY Kubrick is supposed to have banned screenings of his film of A Clockwork Orange in Britain after a copycat killing. As yet, however, recorded incidents of extreme violence inspired by radio drama are thin on the ground, and the picture is unlikely to be changed by last Saturday's adaptation of A Clockwork Orange on Radio 4. The problem for radio violence is partly one of emotional intensity - seeing blood being inevitably more disturbing than hearing about it. Even more importantly, though, it's a matter of sheer comprehensibility: thumps and gurgles, the suggestive chorus of faulty plumbing that stands in for most forms of assault short of a gunfight, are too unspecific to be much help to the listener.

Of course, comprehensibility can be overrated - some of the best radio plays are ones that are prepared to let go of clarity and nuance every so often, if it means boosting action and emotional realism. But in this case there were too many Hardy's electronic soundtrack. the background, competed with dialogue spoken largely in Nadsat, the future slang Anthony - a complex jargon which on radio reduces every conversation to a matter of squally muskrats in the unchuck and noddying the flobalobs.

The net result was that, to begin with at any rate, it was hard to make out anything much, except perhaps the splash of metaphorical bathwater swiftly followed by the splat of inspires violence, but this came a figurative baby. Adding oc- damn close.

casional translation only served to set the listener's zoobies, or teeth, on edge and oobivat, or kill, the pace and authenticity.

Later, as the ear adjusted, things improved, but only to leave you wondering if Burgess's original is all it's cracked up to be. Every imagined future is bound to pale besides reality when it eventually arrives, but some wear worse than others. It's symptomatic of Burgess's failure that he based Nadsat on Russian, apparently in the hope that it would not date. As things have turned out, it has dated extraordinarily badly - no one would now think that Russia could ever compete with the United States as a centre of teenage culture, and the very idea fixes A Clockwork Orange firmly in its Cold War

The same dualism blunts the novel's moral; in the person of Alex, the vicious teenage thug with the passion for Beethoven, Burgess projected a fairly clearcut choice between moral freedom with all its attendant evils, imponderables going on. John and goodness achieved at the cost of individual will. He seems thumping and glooping away in to have been unprepared for the cosy blandness that has overtaken civilisation - where Heaven and Hell is the title of a Radio Burgess invented for the book 2 documentary about Joe Jackson, and where all the threat and beauty is soothed out of music by Brian Kay's leechlike tones. At least Kay in person is more tolerable than Petroc Trelawncy, who last week spent Brian Kay's Sunday Morning speculating on what Brian might be up to on his holidays

in New Zealand, Radio rarely

Gifford's life too large for big screen

Greg Wood on the trainer poised to strengthen his link with today's big race

despicable villain of the BBC's unlamented series Trainer, but as yet only one British handler has seen himself portrayed in was Josh Gifford, and he was not much impressed by the final result.

The film was Champions, telling the story of the improbable Grand National victory of Gifford's Aldaniti, and it fell to Edward Woodward to portray the trainer. "I thought the film was very disappointing," Gifford said this week. "We saw a preview before the premiere and I thought it was fantastic, it really brought tears to my eyes, but the actual premiere was very disappointing. They'd done a lot of cutting, and I think they cut the proper parts out."

From Woodward's point of view, though, it must have been an impossible assignment. Method acting is one thing, but and Gifford was banned for six it would take more than a few early mornings on wintry Sussex downland to get under the fore the race that we'd be skin of a racing character like Gifford. You would need to said, what am I supposed to do, have lived the life and laid down the experience, from the moment when a 10-year-old getting to Newbury that day and boy left home in 1952 and set out to be a jockey.

"It was in the blood," he says, "my father rode over 100 pointto-point winners before I was born, and I never thought about doing anything else. One day, back in the winners' enclosure father came back from Huntingdon races with the trainer, the next year, with Hill House, Mr [Cliff] Beechener, and I was whose 12-length victory showing off on my pony. He came up to me and said, what do you want to be?' I said, 'a it very much, but I didn't bear jockey', like anybody would at any of the booing," Gifford that age. He said when do you says. "He was very well trained, want to start?', I said 'next the Captain was an artist and he week', and he said 'fine'. I was made a very good job of it, but bloody homesick for a long he didn't do any cheating. He ey, but when it happens to a Percy, whose claims are obvious time. I'd ring home every Sun- told everyone before the race young boy like this, what he's after two comfortable wins so day, and they'd ask, 'are you that it would win, so I really had to go through has been so far this season. I wasn't. But I wasn't going to just don't think people realised ed. They've gone about it like don't believe he's as good as his the Festival meeting itself.

give in." By the time Gifford left Beechener for a job in New- ond victory was in his thoughts has a special place in Gifford's wrong. I'd be a little more conpony and big ambitions set off I'll carry on until I find out what market at the age of 14, he had again recently when Leighton affections, not least since he be-fident as well if the race was at to become a jockey, and still his my children want to do. And an-

THERE may have been hints of prenticeship with plenty of rides several well-known Newmarket on the Flat, and a year later he figures mixed up in the arrogant, rode a winner in the Queen's colours at York. Soon moving on to jumpers, he won the first of four National Hunt champiglorious, big-screen celluloid. It forming a partnership with Caponships in the 1962-63 season, tain Ryan Price which was not just successful, but controversial

> And never more so than in the early years of the Schweppes (now Tote) Gold Irophy. Price and Gifford provided the winner in four of the race's first five years. Rosyth won the inaugural running, in 1962, when 41 hurdlers carecred around Liverpool's tight course with predictably disastrous results. Stan Mellor was seriously injured in a fall at the second, and the race moved the following year to Newbury, when Rosyth won again, apparently after showing unusual improvement Price's licence was temporarily suspended. weeks.

"The old man was told bewarned off if we won, and he not run and tell them we're guilty?"," he says. "I remember asking the guvnor what I should say if they had us in, and he said, 'just tell them the truth, like we always do. No one will ever go

wrong doing that, Joshua'." Two years later, they were with Le Vermontois, and again prompted jeers from some punters. "Some of them didn't like and I'd say 'yes', when can't see what he did wrong. I unne what a genius he was."

The ban after Rosyth's sec-



Gifford has a strong contender for today's Tote Gold Trophy in Mr Percy

not charged, in connection with ssarv and simple-mind-

already served a three-year ap- Aspell, Gifford's young condi- came the first person to win Cheltenham, but he couldn't be only regret is that he did not way. I can't afford to retire."

cowboys."

tional jockey, was suspended for both as jockey and trainer when in better form and he won't let a week after being arrested, but Deep Sensation won in 1990. "After the National, this is the a doping investigation. "Thirty next race which comes to years ago it was an absolute mind," he says. "It was always joke, and I honestly think it's a lucky race for us, and if it had ever more of a joke now," he really been going my way, I says. "I was big enough to get would have won the first six." over it, I was the champion jock- This afternoon, his runner is Mr

"To be absolutely form shows," Gifford says, "but The Tote Gold Trophy still I hope I'm going to be proved since the 10-year-old with a But I still enjoy the winners, and

the punters down."

Victory would be something of a relief for a yard which has had a quiet season so far, and may not be overburdened with runners at the Festival next month. Even so, Gifford is one of just five current trainers with more than 100 winners at Chel-

It is now almost 50 years

make more of his talent for cricket. (He did, however, bowl out Brian Lara in a charity match a few years ago, which is not bad considering that Gifford reckons himself more of a batsman).

with a licence to saddle one at to dinner, to entertain and be blow-out before the Festival it entertained when at my age you want to go to bed at 10 o'clock.

and missed all the fancy early appointing performance that made an impression in what to A growing number of punters, huge open ditch which is term view, and appreciate that tional, and has broken just as

> View, Taking A: Once common but now all but extinct practice, whereby a bookmaker would decide that he did not fancy a particular horse and set about 'getting" it, that is, extending its odds to attract as much cash as possible in the expectation that it would be staying in his satchel. These days, the major bookies tend to fall into line faster than a well-drilled squadron of élite troops, although Ladbrokes did do some good business - and also attracted valuable publicity over their view that Carvills Hill would not win the 1992 Gold Cup. More often than not, though, you will find that if a bookie takes a view, he does so only when the stable lad doing the horse in question has assured him on oath that the an-

Percy can pass rehearsal for Cheltenham

By Richard Edmondson

IT WAS while he was being the fate of the "weighing-room this," Gifford said. "If he's lucky three" that Ted Walsh came up enough to win or be placed we with a strange allusion. He might have a crack at the Chamthought the case epitomised the pion Hurdle with him." sort of justice you could find in countrymen in Guildford and Birmingham.

It is perhaps fitting then that Walsh participates today in a great international love-in at Newbury on St Valentine's Day, a card which exhibits that the Brits can organise a meeting when all Irish parties are happy.

There are five Irish entries for the Tote Gold Trophy, and, with the greatest respect to Walsh's Commanche Court, the best of those appears to be Graphic since it formed part of the Equaliser. Arthur Moore's winner of the Ladbroke Hurdle has been put up 16lb by the Irish handicapper for his Leopardstown win but carries just a mandatory 4lb penalty here - the difference between a brick and a toothpick in his saddlecloth.

Indeed, there are many judges willing to speculate that the six-year-old will go on from this afternoon to play a considerable role in the Champion Hurdle. Though he may be contesting only a handicap, this is not a rash thought. Gold Trophy winners do rather well when trekking west.

Twelve months ago, Make A Stand ran his opponents ragged in this race before making his rivals look scruffy at the Festival. The previous year, the Newbury winner, Squire Silk, managed fifth at Cheltenham, while Mysilv achieved a similar position in 1995. The most remarkable result, though, was Photograph: Robert Hallam four years ago, when Large Action, Oh So Risky and Flakey Dove, the first three from Newbury, filled the same places at Cheltenham, though it was the mare that led home the boys on the major occasion.

The rationale for this history is simple. Newbury's race has always been extraordinarily valu-"Racing has been so good to able (this year it is worth a minme, I've loved every second of imum £100,000) and inevitably it," he says. "It's harder work attracts some very good horses, tenham to his name, even if it now, it's a young man's sport many of them improving up a did famously take him 18 years and owners expect you to go out steep curve. As a searching could not be better timed.

Kerawi, the second favourite, is another who is being primed for the Champion. The gelding's win in the Christmas Hurdle does not look as good, however, now the three behind him that day were slain by Master Beveled at Sandown last Saturday.

A trawl through the form book suggests that neither he Jamie Osborne, one of the nor Graphic Equaliser has as good a chance as Mr Percy. The seven-year-old represents the man with the richest pedigree in the race, Josh Gifford, and he Osborne will be interviewed

other target. "I'm not grumbling about his handicap mark and as he's won two nice races he might as well have a crack at

Mr Percy (next best 2.20) it Britain, the sort that befell his is then, to follow Ask Tom (1.45) on to the day's roster of winners. The latter has been getting the better, albeit narrowly, of Viking Flagship in recent times and he is more likely to be the one improving for a numerically disappointing Game Spirit Chase.

McGregor The Third (1.15) is hardly a surprising selection for the opener, though an arresting element of the day is the first screening of Market Rasen ITV7 in 1982. "Those that

RICHARD EDMONDSON NAP: Elusive Star (Catterick 1.35) NB: Mr Percy (Newbury 2-20)

haven't seen this delightful rural course will see what a splendid place it is," Charlie Moore, the clerk of the course and Market Rasen head of tourism, said yesterday. "I feel that part of Uttoxeter's rise out of the ashes is because they have had this higher profile. And I know perfectly well from my own involvement at Warwick last year that people think the place is going places just because it has been on television. There is that perception."

One reality, of course, was that Uttoxeter used to pay Channel 4 for the privilege of having their racecourse billboarded on national televsion. Charlie is a bit coy when it comes to divulging if he has done the same. "We have had to do a deal," he said. "We have had a bit of help."

An interesting aspect will be how many belicopters survive the spiral down to the track as, during the war, Market Rasen was requisitioned as an anti-aircraft headquarters. Another element to sharpen the mind will be how many beasts actually contest the finale, the Gold Card qualifier.

In a similar contest at Warwick last month there were eight non-runners in a heat which allowed participation at Cheltenham for horses that had merely been declared to run, never mind take part. Torch Vert is already a non-runner in Lincolnshire and it remains to be seen if today will approach anything like the case of the "Warwick Eight".

three jockeys arrested in the doping and race-fixing investigation by police, is to break his silence on BBC television today. too has his sights trained on an- after the 1.15 race at Newbury.

GREG WOOD THE A-Z OF BETTING

V is for ...

Vet's certificate: Piece of paper that a trainer actually has a good reason for scratching a proach to basic hygiene. None horse on the morning of a race, the less. The Virus is invoked of the century, and remains one norse on the morning of a race, the loss, the loss, the loss of the only women to have no matter how short the price. quited and otherwise. Also a hours ago.

punters, who understandably prefer to know about any physical handicaps their selection may be harbouring before it runs rather than afterwards, when a dismal run will often be casually dismissed as the result of a . . .

Virus: Marvellous catch-all exknowledge that very few punters care much for microbiology, other than that nagging worry about whether the bloke hacking his lungs up in the corner of the betting shop merely has a 60-a-day fag habit, or something more contagious. No one can deny that the average stable, be it at the racecourse or a trainer's yard, is very much like the average nursery school, full of youngwhich proves to the stewards sters with immature immune systems and a fairly casual ap-

prices. This is good news for you could easily imagine bell- this day remains a deeply chau- however, now take a long- jumped twice in the Grand Nathe streets of Lambourn and Newmarket, inviting the locals one time, any one of which will cuse which relies on the certain its best. In these days of frequent blood tests, though, which should show up an incubating illness via a high an excuse which should be going out of fashion. It seems, however, that it is just too con-

> Vernet, Helen: Something of a overlooked heroine in the history of the womens' movement, Helen Vernet was Ladbrokes' on-course rails rep for more than 30 years in the first half

ringers with trolleys patrolling vinist business. Small and wellchance of competing for atare, of course, many and var- male bookies on nearby pitchious bugs doing the rounds of es, but thanks to careful cultithe equine population at any vation of her client base, she turned Ladbrokes into the take enough of the edge off a bookmaker of choice, first for horse to cause it to run below many of the upper-crust female racegoers of the time and then. by association, plenty of their equally well-heeled partners. She insisted on working almost white-cell count, The Virus is until her death, in 1956, at the age of 79, and would surely be disappointed that no woman since has made an equivalent venient for many trainers to let mark in bookmaking.

> Value: Which means different things to different punters. There are still those, for instance, who insist that since an odds-on winner is better than a 10-1 loser, the best approach to betting is to maximise the

spoken, Vernet stood no the strike-rate necessary to many hearts. make a profit from hot favto bring out their dead. There tention with the bellowing ourites is impossibly high, whereas someone backing only at, say, odds of 5-1 or more simply needs to succeed in one race in six to break even. The arrival of newspaper features highlighting the best odds on offer has allowed punters to compare the odds in a matter of moments, although any prices picked out by the resident experts as worthy of a bet will vanish just as swiftly. Hunting for the best offer available and setting an absolute minimum - 3-1 is as good a line as any - below which you will never tread is no guarantee of ultimate success, but it will always show a better longterm return than an addiction to odds-on chances.

> Valentine's: The day on which number of winners you back, we celebrate love, both re-

imal dropped dead a couple of

Racing results

BANGOR BANGOR

2.00: 1. RACKETBALL (C. Liewellyn)
7-1; 2. Decoupage 10-11 far; 3. Big Perks
12-1. 14 ran. 7; 5. (N Twiston-Davies). Tota:
17:50; 2:01 5:30, 2:20 DF: 9:70 CSF: 2:300.
7/10: 2:10: NR: Cloudy St.
2.30: 1. PEPITIST (D Bensley) 13-2; 2. Tepeno Gold 5-2 far; 3. Cool As A Cucumber 11-1 12 ran. 7, 9. (M Herrmond). Tota:
18:30; 12:50, 11:90, 2:40, DF: 20:10. CSF:
12:088. Titless: 1:16:14. Tric: 17:35:00
3.00: 1. EBEN AL HABEEB (S Wyrne).
20-1; 2. River Wys 14-1; 3. Ericolite 10-1
11 ran. 13-8 fav Corel Island. 8, 13. (D McCain). Tota: 2:26.25:50, 2:590, 2:370. DF:
13:8840. CSF: 2:2488. Tricest: 12:88831. Tric:
13:30: 1. NOW WE KNOW (T J Murphy)

\$284.0 CSF: 2234.66 Bricast: \$266631. Trio: \$254.60.

3.30: 1. NOW WE KNOW (T J Murphy) 18-1; 2. Lord Of The West 8-1; 3. Missier Blaise 9-4 fex. 12 ran. 20, 14. (M Shepperd). Tota: \$2500. \$2

NEWBURY

NEWBURY

1.50: 1. ZAFARABAD (R. Lohrson) 4-6 tax;
2. Global Search 66-1: 3. Shilling 33-1.5
ran. Dist, 8. (D. Nicholson), Totac 17:0; £10.
£550 DF: £1470, CSF: £216.
2.20: 1. MOON DEVIL (B. Powel) 11-1;
2. Cillion Beat 9-1: 3. Hurricane Lason D-11
tax 9 ran. 8. ½, (M. Camplon). Totac £13-5;
£220, £180, £100 DF: £85-60 CSF: £55-94.
Tion: £35-9.
2.50: 1. SEEK THE FAITH (R. Johnson)
7-2 fax; 2. Massiville Star 14-1; 3. Flaming
Miracle 18-10; £190, £35-0, £290, DF: £220.
Tion: £37-9; £190, £35-0, £290, DF: £220.
SSF: £93-78. Tionest: £27-794. Tion: £75-90.
3.20: 1. VITAL SONG (Mr G Matthews)
5-1; 2. Quiet Confidence 6-4 fay; 3. ProBono 8-1 a ran. 3. 2 (M Dors) Totac £55-0;
£150, £140, £150, DF: £770, CSF: £186 Tio:
£330; £140, £150, DF: £770, CSF: £186 Tio:

23.50: 1. MULLIGAN (R Johnson) 9-1; Lats Be Frank 5-4 fav; 3. Countain 11-2 ran, Nr., 11. (D Micholson), Tota: 1790; 528 140. DF: 2790, CSF: £1935, NF: Storm

tarweether, 4.20: 1. KEN RISK (Jamie Evens) 12: 2. Dan De Man 8-2 fav; S. Premier Ge

eration 4-1, 10 ran. 12, 3, (M Pipe). Tot £14.50; £3.00, £1.60, £1.60, DF: £24.20, CS £38.80, Tricest: £133.42, Tric: £38.90, NR: R er Dewo, 4.50: 1. EAU DE COLOGNE (R Dur

woody) 11-2; 2. Fladey Wood 14-1; 3. Lang-downe 11-2; 9 ran. 4-1 fav Eburg, 6, 4, (Mrs. L. Füchards), Tote: 52-46, 52-50, 52-60, 52-60, DF: 553:10. CSF: 256:18. Tricest: 5291/3. Tric: 288:50. NRx: Claireswan, Native Field. Claire-swan (6-1) was withdrawn not under orders. Rule 4 applies to all bets, deduction 10p in the opund. Place 4 appear in all cers, deduction top in the pound. Jackpott Not won. Pool of £14,555.06 car-ried forward to Newbury boday. Placepott £319.0 (readpott £14,30.) Place &: £16,38, Place 5: £3,76.

SOUTHWELL 1.40: 1. SOLD FAITH (D.R.MCCabe) 12-1; 2. Cheerful Groom 9-2; 3. Shamokin 50-1 10 ran. 5-4 lav Dust (th), Nr. 8. (W Miss-son), Tota: £650; 5540, £160, £2810 DF: 52420, CSF: £6081, Thioast: £2,45845, Thio: £28460 22760. 2.10: 1. MOON GORGE (J Cum) 11-8 for; 2. Fayra 11-1; 3. Sara Moon Classic 5-1 13 ran, Nr, 2/s. (W Jarvis). Rote: 52.00; 5/20, 5220, 5170 DF: 5880. CSF: 51805. Trio: 5840.

2.40: 1. GREENSPAN (J Wildnson) 8-13 tay, 2. Selberry 4-1; 3. Filial 3-1 4 ren. 6, 6. (W Mbir). Tobe 2170 DF: 2220 CSF: 2319 3-10: 1. GLIDE PATH (D Holland) 15-1; 3.10: 1. GLIDE PATH (D Holland) 16-1; 2. Notation 6-1; 3. All On 13-6 few. 12 ren. 5. 7. (J Jenkins). Tota: £1600; 5420, 5280. £100 DF: \$3850 CSF: £3800, Tricast: £2231. Tric: £5730 MF: Supermodel 3.40: 1. RUDE AWAKENING (C Lowther)

Aut 1. Hards Awartenger (C Louther)
4-1; 2. Trojan Hero 9-2 it tay; 3. Hannah's
Usiner 13-2. 12 ran. 9-2 it tay 3 roadway
Melody '4, 2. (C Fairhurs), Tokes (1830; 15:10.
22-40, 12-10. DF; 1: 18140. CSF; 12-971. Tric1811; 13-1712. Trics 15:3.30.
4.10: 1. U-NO-HARRY (A McCarthy) 11-1;
2. Grann Borger 13:1. 12 Certains 11-1. 4.10: 1. U-NO-HARRY (A McCarthy) 11-1; 2. Green Bopper 33-1; 3. Scathebury 4-1 11 rm. 7-4 fev Pine Ridge Led. 11/s. 1/s. (R Hollasheed). Role: 5890; 5290; 5840; 5220. DF: 516370. CSF: 520650. Tro: 521090. 4.00: 1. RASED (Kritherley Harri) 9-1; 2. Belsmann 7-4 fev; 3. Zorke 5-1, 10 rm. 3.3/s. (F Viction). Total: 52140; 5420; 5110, 5350. DF: 52850. CSF: 52306. Tricast: 52490. Tric: 55550.

Placepot: £242.50, Quadpot: £46.30. Place 6: £156.45, Place 5: £25.83.

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6). 10.	RACING	SERV	ICES
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0; 10:	LIVE GOMMEN	TABLES	RESULTS
2	NEWBURY	971	981
. 6 80.	AYR	972	982
- Ty-	CATTERICK	973	983
.	MARKET RASEN	974	984
-1; ID-	LINGFIELD	975	985
	ALL COURS	ÉS RFSI	II TS
¥:	0891 2	61 9	ŽΫ
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Catterick

HYPERION 1.35 Elusive Star 2.10 Lord Hastie 2.40 Country Orchid 3.15 Minella Express 3.50 Coralette 4.20 Dr Bones 4.50 Dawn Mission

Going: Good (Good to Firm in places).

Left-hand course, unclusing and sharp.

Course is NW of town on ASSA ADMISSION: Cub Ett; Tester-sale ST; Course 22:00 CAR PARK: Received 22 rest free.

BLEADING TRAINERS: Mire M Reveloy 21:94 (223%), in Hammond W-123 (144%), G M Moorre 9-76 (122%), T Eastertry 8-25 (22%), and M-123 (144%), G M Moorre 9-76 (122%), T Eastertry 8-25 (22%), G GENON 11-76 (145%), T Reed 10-78 (128%).

FRYOURITES: 22-365 (834%).

BLANCERED FRYS TIME: Genolity (viscred), Forbes (210); Talethath 2400; Wandle Express (215).

1.35 LEVY BOARD MARES NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m

SEATO P BUSINE STAR (SO) (D) (BF) Mrs M Reveloy 8 TI 7 G Lee (90-FP ALLERBECK (4) J Goulding 8 TI 0 L Cooper (7) (05-OPP BROOK HOUSE (4) B Boushed 7 TI 0 M Newton (7) PUD DARRO'S GRAL (SO) J Haynes 5 TI 0 D Parker (EPITLE ANGEL W Storey 7 TI 0 L J O'Hara (SPECA CHIEF ANGEL W STOREY 7 TI 0 J Burker (19) J Burk GENTLE ANGEL (#9) J Haymas 5 11 0 D Parker
GENTLE ANGEL W Storey 7 11 0 L CHara
GENTLE ANGEL W Storey 7 11 0 L J Burton
(#100 LONG LE POINT (22) 0 Lamb 7 11 0 Michael Brannan (#)
(#100 MICHAEL (#) W Reed 5 11 0 Michael Brannan (#)
(#) W REED 5 11 0 Michael Brannan (#)
(#) W REED 5 11 0 L Thomas (#)

O PETITE BUSH (#3) 8 Elson 5 11 0 C MicCommack (\$)

3 PHAR CLOSER (522) W Kemp 5 11 0 C MicCommack (\$)

2.40 ASKE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) 25,000 added 2m

Minimum weight: 10st. True handlosp weight: Barnburgh Boy Set 7tb. BETTING: 11-5 MagSano, 3-1 County Orchid, 13-2 House Of Dreams, 7-1 1 Gospel Song, 3-1 Brankles Way, Barnburgh Boy, 14-1 others

3.15 RED ONION GRAND NATIONAL TRIAL (HANDICAP CHASE) (C) £10,000 3m 6f

African weight: 10st. Inter harding weights: Russian Coole Ser 13th, Pink Gin Ser 10th, D'Arbley Street Set Sh. BETTING: 9-4 D'Arbley Street, 3-1 Evangelica, Pink Gin, 4-1 Minelle Express, 7-1 Russian Coole 3.50 IAN HUTCHINSON AMATEUR NOVICES H'CAP H'DLE (F) \$2,500 3m 1f 110yds 1-834 PORT RETES (15) JOING 6 11 10 July 16 R O'Ryan (7) 50F-10 THE KHOWCA (57) Ms A Switzerk 8 11 4 Jilles H Brookshaw (7) B 656- ALNEROOK (344) A Writers 7 11 2 Jily 8 Ghaton (7) B 656- ALNEROOK (344) A Writers 7 11 2 Jily 8 Ghaton (7) B 7 Jily 16 Jilles H Brookshaw (7) B 656- ALNEROOK (344) A Writers 7 11 2 Jily 8 Ghaton (7)

4.20 WHITBY NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) 25,000 added 2m 12223 NOBLE TON (25) (D) (55) P Exists 6 ft 2 _______ D Byrms
13-733 SMOLENSK (77) (D) J Berry 6 ft 2 _______ D Parker
10097-0 TRIONA'S HOPE (8) E Caine 9 ft 2 ______ Mr P Congress (7)
P-3726 WHITESATES WILLE (45) (5F) J H Johnson 6 ft 2 ______

= 6 declared = BETTPNC: 10-11 Dr Boues, 3-1 Nobin Tom, 4-1 Smolennic, 6-1 Withousier 4.50 BROUGH HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,500 added 2m 3f

i -25/FP DAWN MISSION (8) (BP) T Easinty 6 to 12 ______ N Homocias (5) - 0-585 TIP IT IN (14) (CD) A Smith 9 to 7 ______ N Homocias (5) - 3 - 3 - 10 GRAY PASTEL (77) M Pipe 4 to 5 _____ N Homocias (5) - 4 - 60-23 APOLLO'S DAUGHTER (79) J Coulding 10 to 2 ____ Cooper (7) - 5 - 20022 HOBBS CHOICE (89) (BF) G M Moore 5 to 0 ____ N Bentley B 6 - 232236 SOLDHER MAK (49) J Mexico 5 to 2 _____ E Husbood (5) 7 PASTEP WHATDIDYOUSAY (30) B Bousted to 10 3 __C McCormack (5) 6 0/1-PP TEMPTED (73) J Hayriss 10 2 1 _____ D Parter - 8 declared - GETTINC 3-1 Gray Pastel, 7-2 Hobbs Choice, 9-2 Daven Mission, Tip it is, 8-7 Apollo's Daughter, Soldier Mak, 25-1 Whoteldyousay, Tangsted

SPORT ON TV

IF THE Olympic movement needed bringing up to date, Canada's snowboarding stoner, Ross Rebagliati, was the man to do it as sport and youth culture collided in a five-ringed haze.

It turned out that performanceenhancement isn't the problem - and yuara smoking" in a tone of naked quite right, too. Cannabis can only be performance-wrecking, I'd have said. From what I've seen at Nagano this week (BBC and Eurosport), I'd rather walk through Bangkok airport with a sackful of high-grade skunk than go within staggering distance of a snowboard with even a single nanogram of dope in my bloodstream, let alone 17.8.

At the announcement of the positive test, even François Carrard, of the International Olympic Committee, was apologetic, saying, "Opinions were quite split as to whether to apply sanctions." The highlight was when Carol Anne Letheren, secreWednesday lunchtime, saying, "He spectating experience. claims he's the victim of passive mardisbelief, and when Letheren spoke spends in an environment where he is exposed to marijuana users," the not on the Brits. They also suffered press conference cracked up, and a smile spread across her face. I imagine half the reporters were laughing at what Rebagliati's excuse said

right, and I'm Howard Marks." The idea that certain sports might benefit from a slightly woozy head is somewhat implausible. (and ski jumping strikes me as a particu-

about snowboarding, while the oth-

er half were simply thinking, "Yeah,

tary-general of the Canadian Olympic larly bad example for the authorities that it is played in a nice comfy are-Association, faced a media corps that to cite). Not even curling would na-Pd always pictured it being played was obviously loving it. Hazel Irvine benefit from a pre-match toke, by rustics in mufflers and mittens on introduced the BBC's news item on though I suspect it might enhance the a frozen lake somewhere north of Tim-

from the whims of the host broad- seals - it was like watching the highcasters - for three nights in a row, four of "the significant amount of time he curling matches were taking place, with cameras at three of them - but from the fact that their studio punhalf-sheepish, half tongue-in-cheek dir, Hammy McMillan, while clearly a nice bloke, is about as invigorating as an overdose of Rohypnol. He might, of course, have been cowed into near-silence by the Beeb's virtual studio, a sort of ice dome perched amid the mountain tops. You half expected to see Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood peeping over the curling in like manner had a similar

dra City. The second surprise was the The BBC has suffered this week racket the curlers make, barking like ly hectic ending of Rashomon on Channel 4 a couple of weeks ago.

If you're easily bored by curling and I must confess to one or two light snoozes over the course of the week - with a simple technique it's easy to make it strangely interesting. I used to love watching Come Dancing with the sound turned down, and it's the only way that figure skating is remotely bearable (any correspondence on this subject will be binned, by the way). Watching the parapet behind Ray Stubbs' shoulder. effect - it became a wholly novel ex-Curling's first surprise is the fact perience, like watching a weird alien

humanoid insects. Progressing to the slow first movement of a Bartok string quartet on the headphones turned it into something even stranger - first, the skip's ferocious concentration, then one of the sport's most compelling characteristics, the contrast between the stately progress of the stone down the rink, like the Queen Mother drifting serenely towards the "house", and the sweeping of the frenzied worker-ants, ushering her along, Ross Rebagliati

would know what I mean. I strongly suspect, from their pittful performance against Chile, that the England football team had been indulging in some heavy passive dope-smoking themselves. Watching the highlights (ITV) and then listening to Glenn Hoddle and Alan Shearer talking it up afterwards was

ritual performed by multi-coloured a perplexing experience of the "were Dioa Dublin could be excused,

he was still high from actually putting on an England shirt, and Michael Owen didn't try to hide his disappointment. The Hoddle and Shearer Show, however, reminded me of nothing less than that bunch of bright-eyed, media-coached, pagerdriven PR-pods (Invasion of the Mini-Thatchers). New bloody Labour. And while we're on the subject - and though I can think of no sporting as-sociations except for his affiliation to Burnley FC - I raise a glass (or should that be an ice bucket?) to Danbert Nobacon, my Man of the Week.

What has obviously not been grasped by John Prescott, who following his drenching looked like an especially grumpy Kenny Dalglish, is that that's all politicians are good for.

Much maligned mercenary who never fails to entertain

Adam Szreter on the tale of Sergei Bubka, who competes in Birmingham tomorrow

DESPITE the fact that the coffers of British athletics have been bled dry with the payment of exorbitant appearance fees by various promoters over the past 15 years. Sergei Bubka, one of the most bankable athletes during that time, will attend only his third meeting in this country tomorrow at the Bupa indoor event in Birmingham.

In the process of breaking the world pole vault record a staggering 35 times, indoors or out since 1984. Bubka has attracted his share of adverse publicity. His method of moving the record up by a centimetre at a time, ensuring a prize every time, has led to him being labelled a mercenary, but necome the prevaiing curren-

Bubka himself will not tire of pointing out that for him, it is the competition that counts. After all, he set the first 10 of his world records while he was still living in his native Ukraine and hardly received a penny; and unlike one or two high-profile athletes of his generation, Bubka can seldom be accused

of not giving value for money. The first time he competed in England, at Crystal Palace in July 1984, he set the third of his world records, and the last time, at the same venue in 1993, he provided us with what is still the only six-metre clearance seen in this country. Tomorrow at the National Indoor Arena he will almost certainly attempt to break his existing record of 6.15m, also set indoors in his native city of Donetsk five

Now 34, his record-breaking days are numbered but Bubka has stated his intention of get-Olympics. Despite winning every World Championship since the inaugural one in 1983 - a feat unlikely to be equalled

settle with the Olympics as a combination of boycotts, injury and, in 1992, a rare failure, has restricted him to one Olympic gold medal.

It was after the break-up of the old Soviet Union that Bubka moved to Berlin and then to Monaco, where he now lives, His friend Andrei Medvedev, the Ukrainian tennis player, is one of his neighbours. Bubka has spoken of a desire to become involved with sports administration when he eventually hangs up his pole, and with the headquarters of the International Amateur Athletic Federation now in Monaco he is handily placed.

It was in conjunction with the in a sport where cynicism has IAAF that Bubka offered his services in October at a sem cy, this might just be a trifle rich. nar in Budapest, where his contribution to a discussion entitled Limits and Possibilities in Human Performance gave a fascinating insight into own development. "My interest in sport came from playing in the streets around my home with my brother and my friends," he said. "As a boy I loved to play all sports, especially street hockev and football. I would run like crazy because I just had to win. As long as I can remember, the spirit of sport was in my blood.

"By the age of 10 I had taken part in most sports and a friend of mine recommended me to a pole vault coach called Vitaliy Petroy because he knew I was strong for my age. Petrov was to be the greatest influence on my life as an athlete.

"I was with him for 16 years and no one in the world knows more about pole vaulting technique. "He showed me that the pole vault was really two sports: it was athletics on the runway, ting through to the next during the approach and takeoff, and it was gymnastics once you were in the air and until you cleared the bar. Since 1990 I have had a gymnastics coach who - he may feel he has a score to helped me make great im-



Opening the bank vault: Sergei Bubka commences his run-up

provements in the second phase tions? I need to think about of the vault and I would say my technique, about running, about ability in this phase is what helped me break world records."

Bubka has often been construed as aloof and unap- become more successful." proachable, but says this is just another aspect of his performance. "As an athlete I have had to learn to be reserved, to waste will be among the dying breed no energy that could be used in of athletes paid to appear in this competition. I realised that I was sensitive by nature and that

sometimes I let things affect me. "I arrive at the stadium two hours before a competition because I want to look at every possible thing that could influence my result: bow is the vault area. where are the stands located, what are the weather condi- to miss it, whatever he does.

my warm-up. Finding motivation is something you must work harder at as you get older and

Tomorrow in Birmingham. Bubka, along with Haile Gebrselassie and Maurice Greene, country. There will be no Ferrari or Mercedes for a world record, as there has been before for Bubka, and whether he finds the necessary motivation remains to be seen. But if it is the last appearance in Britain by one of the greatest athletes of all time it would be a shame

BUBKA'S WORLD RECORDS

5.85m Bratislava 26.5.84 5.81 m .. Vilnius, Lithuania 15.1.84

INDOOR

OUTDOOR

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Greene on target in race to escape Johnson's shadow

By Simon Turnbull

Last summer Maurice Greene blasted from the shadows to the front of the world sprinting order. Now the man they call the Kansas Cannonball is threat will be within his range when he ening to shoot past the lingering shadow of Big Ben.

ing blocks for the 60m in the Bupa Indoor Grand Prix meeting at the National Indoor Are- I'm sure it will happen. na in Birmingham tomorrow evening not just as the 100 metres world champion and the er but also as the new likely lad come, I'm sure." in the near decade-long race to eclipse the tainted high-speed deeds of Ben Johnson.

September 26 marks the 10th anniversary of the day Johnson was infamously snared in the drugs net at the Seoul Olympics, two days after he pushed the human speed limit to 26.9 mpb, fuelled by the anabolic steroid, Stanozolol. The 9.84sec to one Canadian who staked a more lasting claim to time it took Donovan Bailey to Paso two years ago. strike gold in Atlanta, Big Bad be found marked with an asterisk in the record books.

checks on the Kansas Cannonball, though, time would appear to be finally running out for that adjunct of shame.

The 23-year-old improved from 10.08sec to 9.84sec last summer, in speeding from US Olympic trials also-ran to Bailey's surprise successor as 100m world champion. And the Greene Machine has continued to gather momentum this winter, equalling the world indoor record for 60m in Karlsruhe on 1 February and breaking it with a clocking of 6.39sec in Madrid two days later.

The old mark, 6.41sec, stood officially to Andre Cason but was also, significantly, another record time stripped from Johnson after what the Toronto Star Zero in 9.79 sec."

Greene has set 6.37sec as his 60m target before the end of the indoor season, though the collapse. chances of him beating the clock again in Birmingham

Millrose Games in New York. Whatever his fate in the

National Indoor Arena, the

new fast kid off the blocks is

convinced the 100m world

records, both legal and illegal.

th still in the st

., insists

-insom

races outdoors this summer. "I want to accomplish some-Greene settles into his start- thing no one has done before," he said. "If my training continues the way it has been going

"My coach, John Smith, thinks I can run 9.79 this summer. I think it will be more like 60m indoor world record hold- 9.76. The world record will

Such has been Greene's progress since uprooting from Kansas City and joining Smith's golden group - Ato Boldon Marie-Jose Perec and company - in Los Angeles 17 months ago he could even become the absolute fastest man on record. That literal distinction belongs not to the steroid-charged Johnson but to Abedele Thompson. 100m world record stands at the Barbadian who was blown through 100m in 6.69sec with the assistance of a near galethe Olympic title but, next to the force wind in the thin air of El

It would take little more than hlink to miss Greene's fleeting part tomorrow night in a show which raises the curtain on Judging from all speed a new era of major televised productions for British athletics. Even Jonathan Edwards confessed he found the last two years a turn-off, and he was playing a starring role.

The cast assembled for the Birmingham revival is so sparkling Edwards is in danger of being outshone in his own event. The world record holder is joined in the triple jump by the American who beat him to Olympic gold in Atlanta, Kenny Harrison, and the Cuban who snatched his world title in Athens, Yoelbi Quesada.

The 140-minute programme seems likely to be packed with as much high-class action as the sport has produced domestically in the past two years. That would be a supreme irony, givcalled his fall "From Hero to en the fact that the meeting has been organised on a tight budget in the wake of the British Athletic Federation's financial

 Du'aine Ladejo withdrew from the Bupa Grand Prix yescould be said to be up in the air. terday. The European outdoor He is jetting to Britain this af- champion has pulled out with termoon, after competing in the a hamstring injury.

Cayard strikes out as fleet close in on Cape Horn

It was all going to plan for Paul Cayard and his crew on EF Language as they increased their lead on the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race, opening a gap of 56 miles on the second-placed Swedish Match.

The American skipper wants to build as big a lead as possible, because he believes the fleet will compress dramatically once they round Cape Horn, possihly later today.

"It is easier to be in control when you are at the front," Cavard said yesterday. "I believe the race will restart at the Horn. This is a very long and tricky race, hundreds of miles can be won and lost going up the coast of South America."

After 13 days at sea since leaving Auckland on the 6,670 mile, fifth leg to Brazil, the fleet are eager to escape the south-

ern ocean. However, they know that the winds off the coast of Argentina are as fickle as they are ferocious before the Horn.

"It also looks like the leaders will get some headwinds or at least lighter winds in the vicinity of the Horn," Roy Heiner, the skipper of sixth-placed Brunel Sunergy, said, "so the present stretching will stop, and compress the field again."

This is making a number of skippers reassess the way they approach the Horn. Grant Daiton has decided to take Merit Cup, currently fourth, further south. "We are heading where there's more breeze, otherwise we will be in big trouble."

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE WHI BREAD HOUND IN WE WORLD RACE
(Iffith leg, 6,970 million, Aucklend, MZ, to
São Sebestillo, Brah: 1 EF Language
(Swe) P Cayard 2,961 miles to finish: 2
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Imos; 2 Toelhoa (US) P Strandsridge +12;
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Brunel Sunergy (Neth) R Heiner +230; 7
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1901. Lieaths: Louis Lillisiana 2573, New Conton byingures of land ap

Catapulting through the ocean as we play chicken with the wind

hull as Merit Cup was catapulted down the southern ocean waves - going balf sideways, half straight.

The trimmers and helmsmen have shown tremendous skill keeping us on course on this fifth leg of the Whitbread - and safe. Twice we were doing 31 knots, with the gusts coming and going.

The aim is to keep the spinnaker on through the puffs. On Thursday night they were getting up to about 42 knots and then dropping back to 32. We were playing a game of chicken with the wind, with a medium-sized we could have got it down even if we had wanted to.

The helmsman has to anticipate the gusts and get the bow down and feel the lift of the wave, which you can't see in the blackness. As skipper, I don't like to think of the damage we would have done had we broached at those speeds.

IT HAS been like a Disneyland ride, dead in the water yet we had a westwith speeds unbelievable for a mono- erly of about 20 knots and we were doing 13-14 knots.

There's no future staying in the north, so we've decided to head south where there's more breeze, otherwise we will be in big trouble. We hope that it won't be too expensive in terms of miles lost. The next two position reports won't be very kind to us. Toshiba will probably get away, but we should hold on to Innovation Kvaerner.

In the more moderate conditions, the crew tidied up, but everything is still very wet. The sun is out, but there's not enough heat in it to dry spinnaker up all the time. I don't think anything. We cleaned up all the food that had been spilled on the floorboards, and all the other gear and clothing has been stowed.

It was stark contrast to carlier in the week when we had to contend with freezing water, violent winds, a spinnaker pole snapped in two places, the top three battens in the mainsail broken, and half the crew Compared with the run through with colds. And it's supposed to be the night, yesterday felt like we are summer down here.



GRANT DALTON

It was impossible to settle the boat down. No sooner was a heavy spinnaker up than we would be flattened by a mighty gust and so the struggle would start to get the sail on board with frozen fingers and faces blasted by icy water.

You drag the sail down below. probably shipping a couple of tons of water downstairs as you open the hatch and repack the sail waiting for the squall to pass. The whole process takes about 45 minutes - it's very phys-

ical and it goes on day and night. In addition, so much water seems to be getting below that we have had to pump out the lee bilge at least

every hour - sometimes more frequently.

We haven't seen any ice yet but, like I say, it has been very cold. On deck the air temperature is only one or two degrees C and there has been driving rain. The bow is under water at times with two feet of solid water washing down the deck at 20 miles an hour. It is impossible to stand up, so everyone is secured with harness and

washed overboard. Motocross bike masks protect the face from the force of the cold spray - so there is no need to duck when you see it coming, even if it is still instinctive to do so, but you can still feel the cold. Everything gets wet and

lifeline. We cannot risk anyone being

everyone is soaked to the skin. . However, when you are confident of averaging 380 miles a day in this sort of weather, you have to be very happy with the boat's performance.

A lot of people thought we wouldn't be able to back it downwind in a blow following the pitiful performance on the second leg from Cape Town to Fremantle. I even had a few doubts.

But the fact was we didn't really get a shot at the big winds on that leg. What we did recognise was possible weaknesses in that area and we

made adjustments to rectify them. But there is the exhibitanting side. At times we are flying through the air with more than a third of the yacht right out of the water.

Contrary to what people think there's no fine line between maximum speed and safety. It is a line we cross only at the risk of putting the boat and crew in great danger.

Section .

Sailing at this speed in these conditions is dangerous. It is not safe at all. We calculate the risks and do all we can to minimise them, but there is always the possibility of catastrophic gear failure.

However, the Whitbread is a race, not a cruise. We all knew what we were in for. If we wanted to go cruising we would do that in the Mediterranean, or Caribbean, not in the

southern ocean. We're looking forward to getting round Cape Horn. We want to get out of this place and on to Brazil.

Resurgent Tigers mark out new territory in the Super League jungle

him to celebrate his testimonial with this year. Like everyone else, the Great Britain prop and the rugby league club's longest-serving player had his doubts.

There was this feeling that Super League didn't really want us and there was a stage where everyone was rubbing their hands together and thinking that we were going to save them the job of kicking us out," he says.

When Stuart Raper arrived as coach he drew on that. All through that campaign in the second half of the season he was telling us that no one was going to help us but us."

Cas escaped relegation and now they are not merely strengthening themselves on the pitch, but reinventing themselves as the sort of rugby club without which Super League

not - that Super League is about clubs in large centres of population. Castleford is a small town and not a notably prosperous one - "It's taken so many knocks that sometimes there has only seemed to be the rugby team left," says Sampson - and is hemmed in by oth-

er equally parochial league towns. A hopeless case? Not according to the club's marketing and media manager, Michael McDonald - like Raper, an Australian from the Cronulla club in Sydney - who is taking the lead in transforming the Tigers' image.

"This has been known as a very tradinional club and not particularly forwardthinking," he says. "The challenge we face is to move it forward on and off the field and we have decided to meet that challenge head-on."

THERE were times last season when been an undercurrent of thinking.

Castleford were facing extinction, now they are been an undercurrent of thinking. sometimes articulated, sometimes looking for expansion. Dave Hadfield reports

> have in mind will be guaranteed immediate popularity. The proposed move out of town to a new stadium will not please those who stroll across the street to enjoy the atmosphere at Wheldon Road.

"We will listen to everybody's opinions, but the fact is that when people go for entertainment these days, they want to do it in comfort," McDonald says. Equally heretical is the idea that

Castleford should break out of their traditional heartland and attract spectators from rival territory, like Wakefield and Featherstone, as well as the broad acres beyond.

"Super League provides the best players and the best competition.

Not everything he and the club

There are a lot of people out there

who just need a bit of prompting to come and see the quality of players involved in Super League. They can watch us as well as watching their local club," McDonald says, "We don't want to lose the passion that people

just want to spread it wider." McDonald has a template for his vision of a club that transcends its locality and becomes bigger than its home town. He has studied the success of the Green Bay Packers in American football and has spoken to them about some of the techniques they have used to spread their appeal outside their obvious catchment area.

in Castleford have for their club, we

Much of this echoes what has already been achieved at Bradford, but however often the Bulls and the Packness on the pitch to make it work.

That is the task for Raper - who admits he would now be back on the beach in Cronulla if Cas had gone down - and his players. Sampson, a cornerstone of a decade's-worth of Castleford sides of varying quality, believes that they have got what it takes.

The club's squad has been growing - in both senses. "We've got a squad of around 25 players who could go into the first team now, which hasn't been the case in the past," he says. "And where I always used to be the biggest in the pack, now I'm one of the smallest.

"It's going to be harder for us this year, because people will be expecting more of us. But I honestly think that we can make the top four. We're not up there with Wigan and Bradford, because we baven't got

ers invoke marketing as the key to their personnel, but we can be in the their success, they need to do the businext group with St Helens, London and Lecus

The Challenge Cup tie with Leeds today is an early test of Castleford's new sense of purpose and optimism. "So far it's a lot of words," says Raper. "It's heading in the right direction off the field, but we have to turn it all into re-

sults on the paddock." Failure to do so at Headingley will create a vawning, anticlimactic, seven-week gap until the start of Super League. It's a reminder that the Chinese do not regard the Year of the

Tiger as propitious. "It's been a big build-up and it could all come crashing down," Sampson says. His 10 years at Castleford have made him a realist. that the operation is not yet un-He also discovered the other week recognisably slick.

By Dave Hadfield

tre stage.

begins in earnest this weekend,

with the Silk Cut Challenge Cup

ist craw, but at least it gets a

prime showcase. That is more

true than ever this year, with ter-

restrial television showing two

live ties in each round. The first,

at Headingley this afternoon,

was an obvious choice. Meetings

between Leeds and Castleford

Murray, has sprung one surprise

by naming the converted sec-

ond-rower, Darren Fleary, in

the front row, with the Great

Britain prop. Barrie McDer-

mott, fit again but on the bench.

Keighley players who moved

across to Leeds last season.

Most have now returned, but

Fleary has impressed suffi-

ciently to be kept on. Accord-

ing to the man he is keeping out,

Marc Glanville makes his

competitive debut in a Leeds

he is well up to the job.

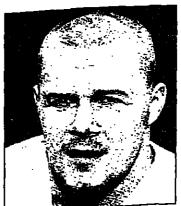
Fleary is one of a clutch of

The Leeds coach, Graham

are always passionate.

Leeds ready to

rely on Fleary



Sampson: Backing top-four finish

Arriving to pick up the proceeds from his pre-season testimonial match against Sheffield, he was expecting a cheque. "But they hadn't been to the bank, so they gave it me

in big bags of coins." It is a good metaphor for Castleford's situation as they try to con-

Bath still in running for **Premiership** title insists Robinson

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

ANDY ROBINSON, the Bath coach, insists his European champions can still steal the Allied Dunbar Premiership title from under the noses of Newcastle and Saracens, even though the two favourites have an eight-point cushion on which to rest their expensively recruited backsides. However, a Bath victory over Wasps at the Recreation Ground this afternoon will do more than lend weight to Robbo's optimism. It will also expose one of his more controversial arguments as so much stuff and nonsense.

Robinson remains a passionate supporter of the Heineken Cup, despite the boycott unanimously declared by the 12 top-flight Premiership teams. He does not, however, subscribe to the theory that European pool matches should be played in midweek - a measure that would solve the English club's ruinous beef over fixture scheduling at a stroke. "Rugby doesn't lend itself to three games a week," he says. "It can't be done."

Others believe it can, however, and they will point to primary evidence. The West Countrymen had several key players on international duty in France, Ireland and Wales last weekend, but that did not stop them sticking 47 points on Gloucester at the Rec on Wednesday night. Another vintage effort against Lawrence A FEW minutes into the second Dallaglio's half-baked Wasps outfit today will prove that with sensible selection and intelligent use of substitutes, the best sides can indeed survive the occasional three-day working week.

Richard Webster, an influential figure in the defeat of the Cherry and Whites, misses this afternoon's game after undergoing knee surgery and is replaced by Eric Peters, who scored three tries in an 11minute cameo against Gloucester. "I won't give up on the title until it's mathematically impossible for us to win it," said Robinson, "we've got a run of chological one-upmanship home matches now. Our season has only just started."

Saraceus, second to Newcastie on points difference, expect a banker victory at struggling Bristol while the Geordies should see off Harlequins at Kingston Park tomorrow, especially as a hamstring injury has deprived the Londoners of Thierry Lacroix's cultured services at stand-off.

It may well be that another foreign import, Garry Pagel, will deprive Gloucester's Phil Vickery of a possible England debut against Wales next weekend. Northampton's mountainous Springbok prop had the youngster on toast at Franklin's Gardens three weeks ago and although Vickery has shown an unusual capacity to learn new tricks on the run, he cannot expect much change out of Pagel

at Kingsholm this afternoon. "Phil is one-nil down to Pagel at the moment, that's for sure," admitted Richard Hill, the Gloucester coach, yesterday. "But he's only 60 per cent of the player I believe he'll become. We'll know a lot more about him after today's match but if England are looking at him as their World Cup tight-head nest year, he needs to play as many internationals as possible to prepare himself."



Victor Ubogu has forsaken London's night life for a return to the big time at the age of 33

Photograph: Arnold Slater

Why England need Ubogu

half of England's opening World Cup pool match against New Zealand in 1991, the rival front rows pounded into each other sleigh? Clive Woodward, the ond time last summer. "Modfor another set scrum. Graeme Bachop, the All Black scrumhalf, placed the ball directly under the feet of Brian Moore, the English hooker, and snarled: "You can have that one if you want it, Mooro ... but you can't move a bloody muscle, can you?" Indeed, he could not. The ball sat there like a poached egg until the black pack sauntered forwards and reclaimed possession, their exercise in psy-

satisfyingly complete. Now, it is almost acceptable for an English scrum to struggle against three coalface legends of the stature of Steve McDowell, Sean Fitzpatrick and Richard Loe, especially if the experience proves as salutary as it did seven years ago. Similarly, it is not quite the end of the world if two red rose props are shunted from pillar to post by Christian Califano and Franck Tournaire, as were Jason Leonard and Darren Garforth in Paris last weekend. Those Frenchies are a bit spe-

cial, after all. But what about next weekend, when an English unit unable to wrestle its way out of a wet paper bag locks antiers with the Welsh, who tend to feel about as comfortable at the setpiece as a Bedouin in a bobChris Hewett says that problems in Clive Woodward's pack could be exposed by the Welsh for the first time in 10 years

than a knotted chunk of frontrow gristle, but he knows full well that if his pack goes into reverse gear again on Saturday, his credibility will be dangerously weakened. The Dragons have not enioved front-row parity with their nearest and dearest from the opposite bank of the Severn

since they last won at Twickenham 10 years ago, but their current ball-playing trio of Andrew Lewis, Barry Williams and David Young quietly fancy their chances this time round. "We've got no hang-ups about Twickers," said Young this week. "We have the chance to put a smile on the face of Wales." Like all good props, Young

considers the scrummage to be the central dynamic in the psychological and tactical profile of an international match and while generations of heavily cauliflowered uglies have talked up the importance of their peculiar form of Saturday afternoon activity for the best part of a century, recent rule changes have made them more

influential than ever before. "The game has changed out of all recognition," said Young, the sole survivor of that 11-3 win in 1988 and a Lion for the sec-

England coach, played his rug- ern kicking tactics are based by as a pretty-boy centre rather around keeping the ball in play, so the balance has shifted away from the line-out and back towards the set-piece. More importantly still, back rows now have to stay bound until the ball is clear. That makes the scrum

a prime attacking weapon. "I'm not sure how good or bad the English front row is at the moment; certainly, I don't think it's a great idea to judge them on the evidence of Paris because the French had an awesome unit who happened to be on edge. But it was interesting that the English tight forwards struggled for Lions Test places in South Africa. They're all good players, of course, but it became clear over there that the rest of us had built them up and put them on a pedestal. We

won't make that mistake again." So how can Woodward best shore up his crumbling barricades and save himself the agony of watching Rob Howley, Arwel Thomas and Allan Bateman running quality first-phase possession to their heart's content? Simple. He should back his instincts, the first and foremost of which is to pick the players on form. And who is the form prop in England at the moment? Victor Übogu of Bath,

night ago. Woodward's reluctance to embrace the obvious is curious. to say the least; if, as seems likely, he is working on the logic that Ubogu's legs will not last until next year's World Cup, Jason Leonard's continued presence in the side is contradictory in the extreme. Ubogu is playing sharper, more rounded and more athletic rugby than any prop in England at present. That should be more than enough for a coach in urgent

> It is not Woodward's fault that Kevin Yates, his outstanding loose-head prospect, has bitten off more than he can chew on the disciplinary front. "Poor occasional hurry-up.

need of a "w" in the credit col-

"Big Dada" is back on his

game with a vengeance at 33.

Having belatedly realised that

London's hectic night life can

to the West Country, worked

hard on his notoriously unreli-

able fitness levels and is per-

forming with a devil-may-care

swagger that marks him out as

a force of rugby nature. His

match-winning tries against

Cardiff and Pau guided Bath to

the Heineken Cup final and he

was comfortably the most ef-

fective forward in a knife-edge

confrontation with Brive a fort-

old Kev," sighed Andy Robinson, the Bath coach, this week. "He'd be in the team now, no question. It's tailor-made for him. He's the best No 1 in the country by a distance." All the more reason for the England selectors to back their form horse swing along without him for a on the other side of the front year or two, he has moved back

They will also do themselves a favour if they resist the temptation to recall Richard Cockerill and stick with Mark Regan at booker. Cockerill has cultivated quite an image for himself this season - an ersatz Brian Moore with added attitude, he had the brass neck to frazzle the super-cool All Blacks at Old Trafford by trespassing on their haka - but Regan is a heavier scrummager and a more physical presence at ruck and maul. Given England's current anxieties, they should grab every ounce of muscle they can lay their hands

Whatever combination Woodward comes up with this weekend, he must not on any account throw an exceptional talent like Phil Vickery to the wolves. The Gloucester tighthead may well be England's cornerstone come 1999 but as Ubogu demonstrated in the most graphic terms when the two of them met at the Recreation Ground on Wednesday night, old does are eminently capable of giving young pups the

ture against Sheffield.

league is our priority." The captain sees the Cup

all out defence".

Powell is ruled out. Castleford, who drew at Headingley in a new year friendly, have their THE game's oldest competition own new faces. Barrie-Jon Mather and Gael Tallec start, with Francis Maloney and Mike providing a chance to put play-Smith among the subs.

ing rather than posturing at cen-The other Super League clubs meeting head-to-head After a discontented winter, also have a recent draw to their there is an appetite for more credit, suggesting Hudderswholesome fare. Holding the field's visit to Halifax could be Cup as a pre-season event will an equally close affair. always stick in the traditional-

Halifax, still in the familiar setting of Thrum Hall, have their three new Australians -Damien Gibson, Des Clark and Gavin Clinch - in their line-up, along with the veteran Kiwi, Gary Mercer, while Danny Arnold, a Wembley winner with St Helens last year, plays for Huddersfield.

It is Saints' progress the cameras will be tracking as they take on Featherstone. Their coach, Shaun McRae, admits to thinking long and hard about his scrum-half selection before giving the job to Bobbie Goulding ahead of Shaun Long.

Newcomers Paul Atcheson. Chris Smith, Brett Goldspink and Paul Sculthorpe all play. At Wakefield, in a tie arranged for 4 pm to avoid a clash with Featherstone's 1.45, Jason Roach, Mike Eager, Adam Doyle, Danny Farrar, Danny side captained for the first time Nutley and Brendon Tuuta all by Iestyn Harris, but Daryl make debuts for Warrington.

Ten facts about the Challenge Cup

● Four amateur teams will be ■ Swinton have gone the longest taking part in this weekend's last without reaching the last 16. ■ Third-round wins by Featherstone Lions and Ellenborough

took the number of victories by non-League clubs over senior opposition since 1904 - the cut-off point for statisticians - to 14. ■ The 1998 Challenge Cup winners will collect a record £100,000 from sponsors Silk Cut out of a

total prize fund of £486,000. in all 43 ties. Losers this weekend will each pick up a £5,000 cheque. ● Sheffield Eagles have the current longest run of 10 suc-

cessive appearances in the last 16. They have not been beaten at this stage since suffering an 8-6 home defeat to Keighley in 1987.

 Lancashire Lynx, founded in 1989, have never appeared in the

32 for the first time for 50 years. They last achieved it in 1983 with It is more than 90 years since two a 21-13 victory over Doncaster. amateur sides made the last 16. Huddersfield hold the record Challenge Cup score with a

> 119-2 win over the amateur side. Swinton Park, in 1914. Wigan, 6-4 favourites this year, set a competition record when they went 43 successive matches unbeaten from 1988-96. Shaun Edwards, now with Bradford, was the only man to appear

> Of the clubs in action this weekend, only Batley, London, Rochdale, Sheffield, Swinton and Whitehaven - in addition to Lancashire Lynx - have never appeared at Wembley.

> ■ The semi-finals will be held on successive days this year instead of on separate weekends but, up to 1962, they were always played on the same Saturday.

Points not cups come first for Welton captain Green

Hockey

By Bill Colwill

FIONA GREEN, the captain of Welton, the only non-National League club remaining in the fifth round of the EHA Cup, described tomorrow's visit of holders Hightown as a crucial game, but insisted that Welton's first priority will be today's league fix-

"The Sheffield game is a big six pointer," Green said. "We are equal on points, just one place off the bottom and the

game against Hightown as being like "Man United v Stevenage and if we score first, who knows? We have been focusing on ourselves and it will not be

Hirst, who has been scoring regularly this season, in spite of Welton's lowly position. Even so the odds are that Beryl Hockey, their Canadian goalkeeper, will be in for a busy afternoon.

Club preparations for the weekend's double headers will not have been helped by the England's World Cup training camp at Lilleshall this week.

However, it seems unlikely that Clifton (league) or Leicester (cup) will do too much to dent Slough's ambitions of being the first club to take the indoor and outdoor leagues and the cup titles in the same season.

The highlight of the men's National League programme will be the visit of leaders Cannock to Reading. No doubt their respective coaches, Malcolm Wood and Jon Copp. have kept their plans under Welton will be pinning their wraps, despite being roomhopes for that early goal on the mates at an England training Hull University student Pip camp at Bisham Abbey.

Cotton hopeful about feedback from clubs on his vision for the future

By Andrew Baldock

Copies of Fran Cotton's controversial "Club England" blueprint are being sent to all Allied Dunbar Premiership

and Jewson League clubs. Cotton, the Rugby Football Union vice-chairman, has sent in court to evade the Restricit to coaches and club chairmen

before a Twickenham meeting with them on 22 February.

The proposals would see top players contracted first to their country, despite the clubs having largely funded rugby union's professional era and despite the RFU having failed tive Trade Practices Act.

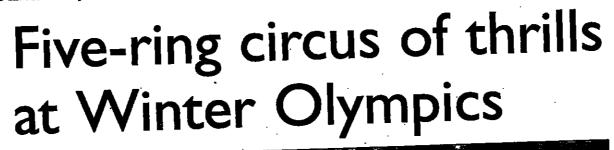
English First Division Rugby Limited, the leading 12 clubs' umbrella organisation, has attacked Cotton's plans, criticising them as "totally unjustifiable", and "undermin-

ing" their efforts in the professional age. "It is vital that I receive feedback from the clubs, who will

provide the vast majority of England representative sides," Cotton said. "The consultation will form an invaluable sounding board for my plans, and reflects a similar process undertaken by Cliff Brittle [the RFU management board chairman] for his personal vision, Rugby Restructure 2000.

"Without it, the proposals could potentially be undermined." Cotton continued. "Once I have as much feedback as possible, then I will ask the RFU management board and Council to support the document so that it becomes RFU policy at the earliest opportunity."







Wide angle: Japan's Gota Miura delights a crowd of home spectators as he goes airborne during qualification for



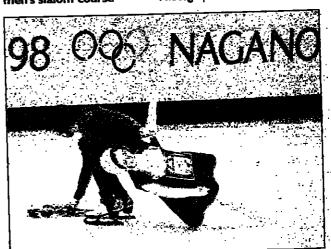
Reggae Boys: The Jamalcan bobsleighers Devon Desmond
Harris and Michael Morgan in action

Photograph: EPA

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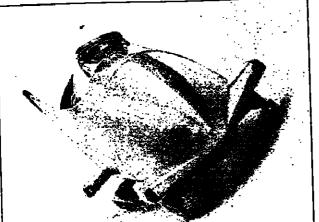


Military might: Japanese soldiers clear snow from the Photograph: Eric Gaillard/Reuters



Clean sweep: The rink is cleared of flowers and a blow-up





Ice wall: Netminder Vitaly Yermeyev blocks a shot from Slovakia during Kazakstan's shock 4-3 win Photograph: AP

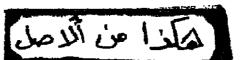
Blade runner: The American K C Boutiette hits full power

Cycle sleds: Snowstorms on the Olympic slopes also affected

commuters at the nearby bicycle park

in the I500m speed skating event

Harris and Michael Morgan in action





ROWBOTTOM

ON THE JOYS OF JAPANESE PROTOCOL

All my life, people have told me generally recognised stages. sible brown snowboots and a and in particular his journey to acknowledge our request. Into stop hunching much all my life, people have told me to stop hunching my shoulders and stand up straight. Finally. rules regarding the treatment I have discovered a country of Royal personages are forwhere my natural stoop is advantageous - in that it can be mistaken for a bow.

about the nuances of nodding watch the British men's curling one's head in Japan, but I team on Tuesday night, there know this - the people here do it at you all the time, and if you cials and dark-suited security do it back you are responding appropriately. You can tell that, because they nod at you Karuizawa.

these shores, we members of the Fourth Estate were reminded of the importance of protocol in Japanese society.

Business cards, for instance, are essential props in the social game. Conversations proceed in set patterns, moving through

Thus, when Princess Anne I am still woefully ignorant out of Nagano town centre to decided to travel 70 kilometres were numerous blazered offimen awaiting her as she stepped off the bullet train at

Two men in suits, talking Before being deposited on into their handsets, moved ahead of the party towards a shiny black limousine waiting in the station forecourt, and opened the rear door with something of a flourish before realising that something was go-

ing terribly wrong. The Princess, wearing sen-

And, not surprisingly, the British Olympic padded jack- Wednesday's ski jump compe- stead, face set under the peak ct, had turned left, rather than right, and was heading in determined fashion for the team

> The expression on the men's faces mingled deep incomprehension with rising

For a moment they stood frozen. Then they sprinted to catch up with the Royal party, whereupon an interpreter made a dismissive gesture towards their suddenly redundant limo. There was nothing else for it - they had to cram into the minibus as well.

Losing face is a serious business in this country.

Somewhere on the Olympic media transportation circuit there is a driver who will always look back upon these Games.

tition, with a shudder of

His - our - everbody's problems began about a mile and a half from the event site, when the single lane traffic became completely jammed.

After 20 minutes or so, with the start time fast approaching, the mood on the coach began to change. From being merely hot - through a combination of brilliant sunshine and a not-sobrilliant ventilation system - the occupants of the bus became hot and bothered.

Noticing that the snowy path beside the road was beginning to fill with pedestrians, a group of us moved to the front and asked the driver to open the door.

He did not answer, or even

of his cap, he stared furiously out of his windscreen.

The request was repeated, politely at first, and then less politely. As the clamour of voices rose, the pressure to act in some way or other clearly became intolerable for the man at the wheel. He slammed open his side window, siammed it shut again - and resumed his furious staring

By now a large French photographer with shaggy black hair had barged his way to the front. "Open the door!" he shouted. "This is a disgrace! This is a violation of the peo-

. He banged his tripod against the window, then reached down and sounded

Nagano was the fact that Japanese can appear verbally vague to Western visitors and have a particularly marked aversion to saying the word

But as the horn blared, and the Frenchman raved, this particular Japanese person was able to overcome that national reticence. "Open the door now!" the photographer demanded. "No. no. no!" replied

the driver, staring him out. At this point, the coach was in tumult, and a tall Pole was desperately trying to engage the attention of passers-by by holding a notice to the windows. "Help," it read. "We are kidnapped by driver!"

If that was so, our kidnapper - clearly under orders to such fun.

Among the things I had drop media representatives been told before coming to only at official stops - was a man in torment.

Suddenly his attention was caught by something happening half-way down the coach. A journalist had slid open one of the large safety windows and was disappearing backwards from the vehicle.

Torn between the impulses to shut the window and remain at his post, our driver was now experiencing perhaps the worst moment of his entire life.

The sniff of fresh air was too much for me and my British colleague - we too left by the unofficial side exit. And as we trod the dazzling snow, my friend started humming the theme from The Great Escape. I am glad for protocol,

because seeing it breached is

Downhill 'surprise by Cretier

Winter Olympics

By Garth Moore

JEAN-LUC CRETTER pulled off a major upset yesterday when he won the men's downhill in Nagano after the favourite, Hermann Maier, suffered a horrific fall.

The customs officer's victoty was a major upset by a man unaccustomed to success. The 31-year-old, who has never won a major downhill, defied the formidable Austrian team to give France their first downhill title since the great Jean-Claude Killy won on home snow in Grenoble in 1968. Cretier made the most of his early start number to clock a time of 1min 50.11sec. Norway's Lasse Kjus, the defending Olympic combined champion, came second with 1:50.51 with Austria's Hannes Trinkl third in 1:50.63.

Maier survived spinning into the air after just 18 seconds of his run down the and cartwheeling over on to his shoulder. He careered through the led after the slalom, held off the two sets of safety netting before somersaulting into heavy snow well off the course. He picked himself up groggily and after a moment signalled that he was

uninjured. The Austrian had won 10 times in the World Cup this season, including two downhills, and was a favourite, not only for this event but all the alpine gold medals, but after the accident he pulled out of the combined downhill, having finished seventh in the slalom.

Could his misfortune have had anything to do with the date, Friday the 13th, or the fact that he was wearing the unlucky Japanese number of Four - or Shi, which means death.

Another Austrian hopeful, Andreas Schifferer, the current World Cup downhill leader, had to wait for 11 minutes as course marshals rebuilt the fencing.

The 23-year-old, who survived a near fatal crash in Kitzbūhel two years ago, appeared to be shaken by watch- But I might have to wear a gas ing Maier's crash - the two men mask from now on."

are close friends, sharing a room on the World Cup circuit. Schifferer was off Cretier's pace at the first check point and continued to fall further behind to finish out of the medals.

Graham Bell also missed a place on the podium, but he earned a place in the records by becoming the first man to race in five consecutive Olympic downhills. He was 23rd of the 28 finishers - four places ahead of Paul Schwarzacher-Joyce, Ireland's sole competitor at the Games. The British No 1, Andrew Freshwater, missed an

Tommy Moe, the American defending champion, had a bad draw. In the sunny conditions, the course was breaking up because of the bright sunshine by the time he went down 17th and he had no hope of retaining his title. He clocked 1:51.43.

The Austrians gave a measure of revenge in the combined when Mario Reiter took the title on a spectacular Olympic debut. The 27-year-old Austrian, who challenge of Kjus and his teammate, Christian Mayer. ..

Whether or not success will change Reiter's life, Ross Rebagliati said he is ready to alter his lifestyle after nearly losing his snowboarding gold medal. The 26-year-old Canadian was cleared of wrongdoing on appeal after testing positive for marijuana following Sunday's giant slalom. Sitting with the medal around his neck, Rebagliati told of his relief at being able to keep the gold, as well as his shock at the initial news he was going to lose his

"Winning the medal was the best moment of my life - losing it was the worst moment of my life," he said. "It all happened in a short amount of time. It was an amazing feeling - quite a

"Life is a learning process if you make bad decisions you have to deal with that. I'm going to change my lifestyle, I'm not going to change my friends.



Jean-Luc Cretier on his way to the gold medal at Hakuba yesterday

Olympic results ALPINE SKIING MEN'S DOWNHILL

1 Jess-Luc Cretter (Fr) 1mh 50.11sec 2 Lasse Kjus (Nor) 1:50.51 3 Hannes Trinki (Aut) 1:50.63 Irt: 27 P Schwarzacher-Joyce 1:58.71

MEN'S COMBINED DOWNHILL

NORDIC SKIING COMBINED (after 90m aid jumping):
1 B Vik (Nor) 2400/ns; 2 V Stoistrov (Rus)
2350; 3 T Ogivera (Japan) 2525; 4 J Kogene (Japan) 2320; 5 C Bisler (Auf) 2310;
6 S Lajuran (Fin) 2305; 7 M Stacher (Auf)
2285; 8 M Rucara (Cz Rep) 2280; 9 K
Ogivata (Japan) 2260; 10 J Daimer (Ger)
220

CURLING
MEN'S PRIS MENARY ROUND: Switzerland & Sweden 2; Norway 10 Carnazarland & Sweden 2; Norway 10 Carnazarland & Sweden 1 Carrada (W6, L1); 2 Roundings: 1 Carrada (W6, L1); 2 Roundings: 1 Carrada (W6, L1); 2 Roundings; 1 Roundi CURLING

2. Semi-finals: Canada v Jepan or USA; Switzerland v Norway. WOMEN'S FINAL PRELIMINARY ROUND: USA 10 Japan 2; Denmark 8 Norway 3; Sweden 8 GB 5; Canada 8 Germany 5. Semi-finals: Canada v GB;

LUGE MEN'S DOUBLES n Krausse and Jan Behrendt Mark Grimmette and Brian Martin (US) 1:41.217
4 T and M Schlegi (Aut) 1:41.217
4 T and M Schlegi (Aut) 1:41.421; 5 K
Brugger and W Huber (II) 1:41.768; 6 G
Plankersteiner and O Hassinisder (II)
1:41917; 7 | Urbansid and A Muhin (Ukr)
1:41968; 8 S Skel and S Wölser (Ger)
1:42.293; 9 D Tchaban and V Kneb (Rus)
1:42.393; 10 A Demochanico and S
Kolobaev (Rus) 1:42.556.

ICE HOCKEY MEN'S FINAL ROUND Group match-es: Group C: Czech Republic 3 Finland 0; Russa 9 Kazakhstan 2 Group D: Swe-den 4 USA 2; Canada 5 Belarus 0.

FIGURE SKATING FIGURE SKATING
ICE DANCING Positions after computatory desirces: 1 P Gristruk and E Piatov (Rus) 0.4pts; 2 A Krylova and O
Oveyarnikov (Rus) 0.6; 3 M Anissina and
G Peizanat (Fr) 12; 4x S-L Bourne and
V Krastz (Can); (Lobecheva and I Averbuich (Rus) 18; 6 B Ruser-Poi and M Marpagilo (tt) 24; 7 E Pursalan and J
Swellow (US) 28; 8 M Droblezko and P Vanagas (Lith) 34; 8 i Romanova and i Yaroshanko (Ukr) 34; 10 S Moniotte and P Lavanchy (Fr) 40.

SPEEDSKATING SPEEDSKATING
WOMEN'S 500M FIRST ROUND: 1 C
Lamay-Doen (Can) 38,39sec; 2 S Auch
(Can) 38,42; 3 T Okazaki (Jepan) 38,55;
4 K Shimazaki (Jepan) 38,75; 5 F Schenk
(Ger) 38,8; 6 Christine Witty (US) 39,06;
7 S Zhurova (Rus) 39,11; 7 M Garbracht
(Ger) 38,11; 8 M Thmer (Nath) 39,12; 10
Sabine Volker (Ger) 39,19.

TIMETABLE (Times GMT) TÓDAY nine skiing: Men's super-G 1145 (Fri); men's downhill 01:15. Nordic combined: 15km individual cross-country 04.00.

loe hockey: Men's final round: Qualifier 1 v United States D 05.45; Sweden v Canada 0645. Women: Japan v Sweden 03.00; Fintend v China 07.00; Canada v United States 11.00. Bobsleigh: Two-men, first run 06.00. Curling: Men's tisbreek: Jepen v USA 00.00; Women's semi-finals 05.00; Men's

TELEVISION TIMES BBC1 05.50-10.40, 1325, 13.55, 14.30, 24.50-03.30; BBC2 10.40-13.35, 24.00-

TOMORROW Alpine skiing: Women's combined (downhii) 0115. liathion: Women's 75km 0400. gh: Two-man, second run 06.00 Curting: Men's and women's bronze medal matches 00.00; women's final 04.00; men's final 08.00

Figure sketling: Ice dancing, original dance 10.00. ice hockey: Ments final round: Russia v Finland 0445; Czech Republic v Qualifi-Ski jumping: 120m individual (high hill) 00,30. Speed skating: Men's 1,000m 06.00. Television times: BBC1 05:50-07:20. BBC2 08:5-11:00, 14:30, 3:30-16:25, 19:00-19:30. Eurosport 07:15-17:00, 19:00-07:5.

team-mates as they bowed out of the Winter Olympics in Karuizawa, Japan, yesterday.

> tipped as a medal hope before the Nagano Games, needed to beat the United States and then hope that other results went their way to reach the semi-finals. They failed at the first hurdle, going down 6-3 to Tim Sommerville's rink, who now play off with Sweden for

Dougie Dryburgh's rink,

knock-out stage tomorrow. Earlier, Britain's women's team were landed with a daunting semi-final against the favourites, Canada, after losing 8-5 to Sweden in their final round-robin match. Kirsty Hay's side led 5-4 at one point, by saying she may have been but lost four points on one end

the right to face Japan in the

to hand the Swedes victory. ner, Evgeny Platov, are still on ceremony," he said.

Women lead the way on ice The British men's curling team target to become the first couple failed to emulate their female to retain the Olympic ice dance gold, despite Grishuk slipping at

one point. They are unbeaten in more than 20 events since winning in Lillehammer four years ago but Platov has fallen on the ice three times this year. Tae Satova became one of

Japan's heroines with a gold medal in the freestyle skiing moguls, but upset fans by wearing her baseball cap at the awards ceremony. Bowing to hundreds of complaints from Japanese fans, the Japanese Olympic Committee has now manners at medal ceremonies.

Japan's Education Minister. Nobutaka Machimura, who oversees the nation's sports, half-heartedly defended her, over-excited. "But it is common sense for anyone to take off his Pasha Grishuk and her part- or her hat during that sort of

enjoys his new surroundings Mike Rowbottom sees Wayne Gretzky,

'Great One'

the NHL giant, make his Olympic debut

ONE MOMENT early in the man in his trademark 99 shirt second period of the United States' opening match again Sweden here yesterday indicated that the seriousness with which the highly paid National Hockey League players are taking the Olympics.

It came when Adam Deadmarsh, one of the 125 NHL olayers taking part in the Games for the first time, slammed his Colorado Avalanche team-mate Peter Forsberg into the boards.

Deadmarsh and Forsberg are good friends. They play golf, together, they go bowling together. They even ride Harley Davidsons together. But no flicker of recognition passed between them.

Forsberg had the last laugh, as Sweden, the defending Olympic champions, came from behind to defeat the US 4-2. The Americans, who have not won an Olympic medal since me the shivers." their college boys overcame the Soviet side and took the title have earned more than \$100m

in 1980, have another testing time today against Canada, easy 5-0 winners over Belarus in their open-

ing match. Canada's presence assures the Olympics of the man their coach, Marc Crawford. described after the Belarus game as "one of the higheststatured athletes of these Games" -Wayne Gretzky.

The summer Olympics annexed its "Dream Team", by clearing entry for the top National Basketball Association players; now the Winter Games has the player known

"The Great

35

secured itself sev- Canada's Wayne Gretzky small," he said. eral Dream Teams celebrates a goal against "But it has been and - in Gretzky - Belarus yesterday Photograph: Reuters It is great to be in

One". There were only echoes of greatness from the NHL's alltime record points and goalscorer as he made his Olympic debut at the age of 37.

The more obviously rumbustious commitment to the cause came from his captain, Eric Lindros, who found time to score two goals when he was not bending the boards with the nearest Belarussian.

Lindros went too far in the last couple of minutes when he launched Andrei Skabelka into an orbit which matched that of Hermann Maier's earlier in the day. The Canadian was sent to the sin-bin for two minutes.

At 5ft 11in, Gretzky is five inches smaller than Lindros told its athletes to mind their and appears a comparatively slight figure on an ice hockey rink. His face, like his game, is all angles - a long chin, quirky eyebrows and a nose that could be Pinocchio's.

> The Great One could not quite score on his long-awaited snap-shot in the third period nearly changed that - but the one else.

showed enough finesse and composure to indicate why he is still a profound influence on the Canadian cause. Like great football players, he has mysterious access to those rare commodities, space and time. The serious back injury he

suffered five years ago is said to have taken the edge off his game. But the only sign he gave of it yesterday was during the changes of personnel. While his younger team-mates vaulted to and fro over the barriers, Gretzky was more sedate -- he used the gate.

Earlier in the week, the Italian player Dira Felicitti provided a little measure of the way in which Gretzky is revered throughout the game. "It's an honour being here," Felicitti said. "I saw him in the athletes" village this morning and it gave

Greizky, who is reputed to

(£62.5m) from the game in a career that has seen him play for the Edmonton Oilers. the LA Kings, the St Louis Blues and his current NHL team the New York Rangers, seemed genuinely thrilled to be participating at the Games.

He is staying at the Olympic village, sharing a room with his team-mate Rod Brind Amour, and happy to be doing

"Before we came, people said we weren't going to like the village because it was so the exact opposite. this environment

"We have a little room where we can watch re-runs of the television coverage, and we have got to meet all the other athletes."

When asked to consider the chances of his earning a gold medal here a week tomorrow, Gretzky was upbeat, but he acknowledged that the Europeanstyle ice rinks - which have 2.500 square feet more than the typical NHL playing surface could be an important factor.

"There is a lot more room on this ice than we expected," he said. "Sometimes we got the puck in areas where we play by instinct, and we found we were a lot further from the net than we were used to. It took a bit of an adjustment.

"No one team here is a clear cut above everyone else," he added. "To do well you have to have a good team system, but there are players who can build on that and make a team special."

He made it clear he was referring to Sweden, and Peter Olympic debut - although one Forsberg. Most of those listening were thinking of some-

Mistakes cost West Indies dear

Cricket

By Tony Cozier

OLD HABITS die hard, and middle order batting collapses of the type that turned the match on its head after lunch yesterday first over of the second session. have become habitual for the West Indies.

Notwithstanding their victoday, it was a lingering danger a rough time. recognised by the team mantensive session for the batsmen on Wednesday to talk it over.

Carl Hooper's masterful, unbeaten 94 and his sixth-wicket integral, yet unwanted, feature touch. of West Indies cricket.

They have found it near impossible to put together totals of 300, even on the best of pitches, and their batsmen repeatedly surrender their wickets with wanton strokes. It was the case made not a single mistake. in the previous Test, and again yesterday.

Brian Lara and Stuart Williams lobbed catches off the leading a pitch of uneven bounce, as paired the damage. Shivnarine Chanderpaul did in the second innings. In the first, Jimmy Adams offered no shot

at all to be leg before. Prior to the series, Lara himof collapses. In the preceding match, three wickets fell for and Chanderpaul. In the second, bad come to nothing.

120 for two became 124 for five when Stuart Williams, Lara and Adams fell.

Yesterday, the West Indies held an increasing advantage, with Lara in full cry and 19 runs were taken off Andy Caddick's

The pitch, for the first time in the series, was ideal for batting. The sun was mercilessly hot ry in the second Test last Mon- and England seemed to be in for

Mike Atherton would have agement, which ordered an in- been ruing his decision to field when his trusted lieutenant Angus Fraser intervened and, as he had done more than once before, exposed West Indian impapartnership of 129 with wicket- tience. Sherwin Campbell edged keeper David Williams that won to slip - no guilt there, for it was the second Test camouflaged de- a good delivery and the little ficiencies that have become an opener has not been in best

The two crucial victims were Hooper and Lara, and both were culpable for injudicious strokes. For more than five hours in his unforgettable effort in the first Test, Hooper had

Not one silly indiscretion. This time he had hardly been in In the previous first innings, 10 minutes when his carelessness was ended with a lofted catch to cover. It was now essential that edge playing across the line on the captain hung in there and re-

Everything was in his favour - this is a ground he knows like the back of his hand - and the ball was coming sweetly from the middle of the bat. His cross-batself stressed the value of part- ted pull at Fraser to a ball wide nerships and the repercussions of off stump was misplaced arrogance, and the resulting catch shifted the initiative towards nine runs following a third- the opposition. In the twinkling wicket stand of 78 between Lara of an eye, Wednesday's meeting



England's Graham Thorpe (left) and Jack Russell take avoiding action as Sherwin Campbell cuts in the Test match yesterday

Headley and Caddick fail to learn lesson of first Test

reports from Port of Spain

HOW MICHAEL Atherton must have wished that he had stayed true to his instincts. He is a captain who always prefers to bat first and having had a good look at the pitch this

morning, he was in two minds. In the end, he was probably persuaded by the general opinion that if England bowled first it would give them their best chance of winning. If his new ball bowlers had found and kept to the right length and line he might even have enjoyed a second helping of lunch.

It seemed inconceivable that Dean Headley and Andy Cadas they had done last week. But they did.

For the third time in sucinnings off with a no-ball and then bowled consistently short. If Headley did not know his job the right place. But Headley was to try and imitate Angus went on as if unaware of what Fraser's bowling a week ago, there is something wrong with his thinking and the chain of command. Surely, since the last Test ended, just about the only piece of advice he can have been given was to make sure he kept the batsmen on the front foot.

Perhaps he had allowed the tension to get to him and his dick could again bowl as badly nerves took over. None the less, one would think that a Test bowler would have worked out for himself some sort of fail safe cession, Headley started a Test mechanism. That might mean cutting his pace down and making sure that the ball ditched in

> There was no attempt by any of his colleagues, including his captain, to have a talk with him. Headley is an inexperienced Test cricketer and at this stage of his development needs careful handling.

was needed.

Russell tracking the leaders

In his first spell, Caddick was not quite as bad as Headley but he ploughed his way through all the colours of the cricketing rainbow. After 16 overs, the West Indies had reached 36 for no wicket and Caddick was ·brought back to bowl a second spell. His first ball was a beauty which left Stuart Williams and had him caught at first slip as he played forward.

Brian Lara leant elegantly into his first ball which was a juicy half-volley and stroked it through mid-off for four. Caddick seemed surprised, but he was probably the only man on the ground who was.

He came back for his third spell immediately after lunch. His first ball found the edge of Sherwin Campbell's bat and it sped away through Nasser Hussain at third slip. A single fol-lowed and then Caddick bowled a short one to Lara who pulled him most dismissively for four. The next ball Caddick over-

compensated and and another full half-volley was driven through mid-off to the boundary. This was followed by a push past square leg for two before a full toss was sent through midoff for another four.

The new-ball bowlers should go back to school.

Sri Lanka's late collapse puts England in control

Myles Hodgson reports from Moratuwa

Sri Lanka A 235-8 v England A

James Ormond gave his most assured international performance to date to put England A in a strong position on the opening day of the third and. final unofficial Test yesterday.

The 20-year-old Leicestershire fast bowler has struggled to make an impact on the dry. flat pitches of the sub-continent but yesterday he rediscovered his rhythm to claim 4 for 38 and restrict Sri Lanka A to a modest 235 for 8 after they chose to bat.

The Warwickshire left-arm spinner Ashley Giles earned England the early breakthrough by bowling Dulip Samaraweera, but after the early spin success England persevered with their seam attack and were rewarded when Ormond struck twice to remove Sanjeeva Ranatunga and Hashan Tillakaratne.

Ben Hollioake made further inroads five overs later by trapping Manoj Mendis leg-before.

Sri Lanka's hopes were increasingly resting on their opener Chandika Hathursinghe, who battled for nearly four hours to reach 90 and hit 16 boundaries before being bowled by Dean Cosker. Ormand then claimed two

further victims as Sri Lanka lost three wickets for seven runs in the final four overs of the day. First day of four, Sri Lanka A won toss

SRI LANKA A - First Imnings
D F Samaraweera b Giles
U C Hathursinghe b Coster
S Ranstanga b Ormond
H P Tillelaratine c Read b Ormo a nananinga 5 Ormond

"H P Tilekaratine c Read b Ormond

M C Mendis tive b Holikoake
P Hewayage c and b Ormond

B de Silva c Estham b Holikoake
P Jayewardene tive b Ormond
N Banderbilske not out
G P Wictramssinghe not out
Extrae (bs. 92, nb5)

Felt: 1-64, 2-31, 3-107, 4-116, 5-165, 6-225,
7-225, 8-232.
To bat: M Sandara.

POWer SHOULD A: "N V Knight, D L. Maddy, O A Shah, M A Ealham, D J G Sales, B C Holl-cate, A F Gales, TC M W Read, J Ormond, J C Powell, D A Coster, Umpires: M M Mendis and S Amarasinghe,

Paulus pushes Novotna to the limit

Tennis

TOP SEED Jana Novotna was nated a one-sided first set. the Paris Indoor Open. Paulus had scored two wins in her place in tomorrow's final. three previous career matches with 29-year-old Novotna and again tested the Czech player.

Paulus, seeded seventh, was wearing more bandages per square inch than most with both her right elbow and left knee heavily strapped. She surged back strongly after look-

Barbara Paulus yesterday before 1-6, 6-4 victory, now plays either qualifying for the semi-finals of the third-seeded Mary Pierce or fifth-seeded Anke Huber for a

> quest to solidify his No 1 ranking by surviving a spirited battle with Spain's Jordi Burillo Thursday in the second round of the Sybase Open in San Jose, California.

the baseline and showed deli-

ing to be heading for an early cate touch at net in his 6-3.7-6 exit after Novotna had domi- victory. He is only 300 points ahead of the Czech Petr Kordraw within striking distance of the Sampras' top spot if he wins Antwern next week.

Ross Matheson of Glasgow, Pete Sampras continued his a wild-card entry, celebrated his hest win since rejoining the international circuit recently in the LTA men's tournament at Chigwell yesterday. Matheson overcame a world-ranking difference of over 700 places to beat top seed Martiin Belgraver Sampras fought gamely from 7-6, 7-6 in the quarter-finals.

sell added a second-round 70 to sional Golf Association Tour his opening 65 to trail Stuart Appleby and Matthew Goggin stage of the Australian Masters in Melbourne. Appleby and the Tasmanian Goggin both

Bradley Hughes carded a 72. In the United States, the PGA Tour has all but embraced Casey Martin and his cart.

fired five-under-par rounds

while the overnight leader

Trying to turn a PR disaster into a plus, Commissioner Tim Finchem said Martin almost certainly will play in a Profes

event this year. Finchem said: "Casey Marby a single shot at the half-way tin is a guy you want playing on the PGA Tour. He is an extremely popular individual and a role model. How would you not want him playing?

After months of fighting Martin - and losing three times in court - the tour now seems ready to accept the disabled golfer.

Finger and Cadle banned from showdown

Basketball

By Richard Taylor

MIKE FINGER, the Birmingham Bullets coach and his London Towers counterpart, Kevin Cadle, may be forced to watch from the crowd next Sunday when their teams face each other in a top-of-the-table Budweiser League encounter at

matches over the past month.

Both have been fined and banned from that game following incidents in separate

£200 for an outburst at the officials after Towers' shock home defeat against the league's bottom club, Watford Royals.

Both have the right to appeal this week, but must be wary that the action by the English Basketball Association indicates a tougher stance this season against abuse and dissent from coaches.

The Manchester Giants' coach, Jim Brandon, has been

Finger has been fined £150 for banned for three games and criticising officials after Bullets fined £500 after verbally abuslost 90-88 at Thames Valley ing the referees following the ligers, while Cadle was fined defeat at Chester Jets. His appeal is on Monday.

> The England coach, Laszlo Nemeth, has recalled Spencer Dunkley to the England team for the European Championship semi-final group games in Belarus on 25 February and against Israel in Manchester on the 28th.

> Dunkley, who plays for Besançon in France, was injured and missed the victory over Denmark in the autumn.

> > andin

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Sporting Digest Baskethall

Baskechall
NSA: Ceveland 103 Toronto 94; Portland 115
Phospis; 100; Utah 118 Bosson 100; Houston
112 Vancouver 103; Secramento 87 Denier 84.
THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Me'ne Euro-League Second phase: Group E: Turk
Telekom 69 Else Plean (Tur) 83; Cruatis Spit
80 Olympiatos (Gr) 53; Porto (Port) 59 Misc-catir fal Aniv (sr) 82. Group F: Real Madrid
82 Benstiton Terelos (II) 54; CSKA Moscow
(Rus) 74 Estudientes Madrid 88. Group G:
Compile Lipolaria (Sionen) 78 Kinder Bologna
18 61 Group H: Ulessoo (Tur) 53 AEK Altens
17: Peritran Belgrade 76 Teansystem Bologna
65 Uni-Bell Trophy secul-final second leg:
London Leoperds 90 Sheffield Sharis 82
(Shedfield von 18S-175 on aggregate).

Cricket

Ciousesiershire have withdrawn the of-fer of a one-year contract to the Eng-land A wicketkeeper, Chris Read, Their cricket secretary, Philip Agust, said: "the has not replied to our let-ters and we are no longer prepared to wait while he talks to other coun-ties." They are now torrised to conties." They are now hoping to coax their former No 2, Reggie Williams, out of retirement to cover for Jack Russell. or regregated to cover for Jack Russes. The Board of Control for Cricket in India has invited the former Australian captain and coach, Bobby Simpson, to act as a consultant to the Indian team for the 1999 World Cup.

team for the 1999 World Cup.
SHEFFIELD SHIELD: Adelatide (final day of four): Victoria 442 for 4 declared (M T G Eliott 122, B J Hodge 118no) and 178 for 6 (D M Jones 53no): South Australia 205 (G S Blewett 111; D W Fleming 6-35) and 444 (T J Nelsen 115, B S 97). Victoria won by four wickes. Nobert (fining day): Queenstand 175 and 282 for 7 (A Symonds 141): Teaming 282 (D F Fille 72; B Crewey 5-51). SOUTH AFRICAN SUPERSPORT SERIES: Cape Town (First day of four): Ortqualand West 239 (W Bossenger 85; M George 5-51). Western Province 0-0. TOURI MATCH: Christichurch (First day of four): Canterbury 100; Zimbabwe 129 for 5 (G W Flower 84).

Football

The Sunderland striker, John Mulin, has joined Preston North End on loan with a view to a permanent move. The Sun-derland manager, Peter Reid, who has agreed to Andy Melville johning Brad-ford City for a month, has also allowed the Denish detender, Kim Helselberg, to join his former club, Esbjerg, until the and of the spagn. the end of the season.

Matherwell have put their assistant manager, Andy Webson, in charge of team affeirs following Alex McLaish's move to Hibernian to become their new manager this week.

manager this week.

Lemnart Johansson, the president of
Lets, European football's ruling body,
received a huge boost in his quast to
become the next president of Fits, the
sports world governing body, when the
African Football Confederation officially
said yesterday that it was backing his
election campaign.

Second Division Alayes, who are tryelection campaign.

Second Division Alaves, who are trying to become the first side from outside the top flight of Spanish football
to reach the Spanish Cup final since
1980, were drawn against Mallorca in
the semi-finals yesterday. Barcelona
will entertain Real Zaragoza in the other trun-loss semi-finals. Germany's coach Berti Vogts named his squad yesterday for a friendly with Omen next week without a single play-er from the country's top club, Bayern Munich Bayern players are normally the single biggest group in Vogts' squad, but the clubs German Cup semi-final tie with VB Stuttgert on semi-timal tie with vib Stutugari on Tuesday means they are unavailable for the International in Muscat the fol-lowing day. Vogts plans to add more players to the 18-man squad for the second match of the two-game Mid-dle East tour, egainst Seudi Arabia in Riyadh on Sunday 22 Febraury.

ruyeut of Survey 22 February.
NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE Rearranged flutures: Tue 17 Mart Oxford Utd.
V Reading (from 14 Feb). Wed 1 Apr. Notfingham Forest v Sheffed Utd (from 14 Feb).
CONCACAF GOLD CUP Semi-final (Los
Angelea): Mexico 1 (L. Hamandez 103) Jamises 0 (extre time celefon ceafi.

CONCACAF GOLD CUP Semi-final (Los Angelea); Mexico 1 (L. Harrandez 103) Jamaica (odra ime golden goal).
THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: African Netims' Cup (Burkton Faso) Group B: Togo 2 (Dote 26, Couludis-Touré 93) Gharra 1 (Librason pen 83), Group C: Nambia 3 (Librason pen 83), Group C: Nambia 3 (Librason Siva pen 67, Penrera 88), French Lasgue: Châtsaunoux 2 Lens 1; Reintes 1 Auparre 1. Spanish Cup quarter-final second leg: Real Belts 2 Res Zargoza 2 (agg; 2-5), Harp Netional Lasgue of Irelandly Pennier Division: Stellytonige Celtic 0 Straffield Wednesday 2. Aron Insurante Combination First Division: Norwich 1 West Harn Q. Under-18 International (Northwich): England 1 Israel 0.

Zimbabwe's Tony Johnstone, winless on the European four since he secured the 1992 Volvo PGA title, opened up a three-shot lead in the South African PGA championship at Houghton Golf Club, Johannesburg, yesterdey. Finding a deft touch with his putter after constitution an American ele enceled. consulting an American eye special-ist sartier in the week, Johnstone pro-duced nounds of 68 and 64 for a 36-hole total of 132, 12-under-per overall, However, with a third of the field still to finish their second rounds on a wet and blustery day, the picture could change substantially before the halfway out is made today. The Scottish International Lorne Kel-ly, 24, won the Strokesaver La Man-ga Masters in Spain yesterday by three strokes. His final 73 gave him a four round total of 288 - two-uniter par.
AUSTRALIAN MASTERS (Huntingdale, Melbourne) Leading second-round scores (Aus unless stated): 134 M Goggin 68 65; S Apptely 66 6. 135 B Hughes 63 72; R Russell (GB) 65 70: 136 R Gibson (Can) 68 67; 138 F Nobio (NZ) 70 68; R Allenby 68 70: 139 D Chopra (Swe) 67 72; D McKenzie 71 68; J Dawes 72 67; M O'Meara (US) 67 72: 140 L Person 75 65; P Lonard 70 70; P McWhnney 72 68; T Carolan 68 72; D Ecob 70 70: 141 J Senden 70 77; P Devenport (NZ) 70 71; F Fowler 71 70; L Westwood (GB) 75 66; P O'Malley 72 69; S Tarl 72 69; M Brooks (US) 69 72; R Pamping 72 69; M Brooks (US) 69 72; R Pamping 72 69.

ALFRED DUNHILL PGA TOURNAMENT (Johannesburg) Leading early second ALFRED DUNHILL PGA TOURNAMENT (Johnanesburg) Leading early second-round scores (incomplete round): 132 T Lehrstone (Zm) 68 54 135 S Duniso (USA) 69 68, 138 E Es (SA) 69 69, 139 R Muntz (Neth) 72 67; S Struver (Ger) 69 70, 140 P Price (GB) 69 77; R Jacquelin (Fr) 72 68, 141 M Gronberg (Swn) 73 68; A Cruse (SA) 69 72; B Dredge (GB) 69 72, 142 N von Rensburg (SA) 74 69; B Cottins (US) 73 69; M MacKenze (GB) 74 68; G Petersen 71 71 (US); J Hewksworth (GB) 71 71; S van Vuren (SA) 70 72.

HAWAIIAN OPEN (Waislee Country Club, Honoluki) Laeding first-round scores (US unless stated): 63 J Huston, D Ogm. 64 T Byrun. 65 D Ishii, M Reid, C Strange, W Austr, J Maggert, T Dodds (SA), 66 T Herron, S Stricker, P Goydos, F Allen (SA).

Ice hockey

Newcastle Cobras' Chris Norton has Newcasse Cooras Critis Nortion has been suspended for two matches by the Superleague disciplinary commit-tee. He will also be fined after an in-cident against Basingstoke Bison on 8 February when a lineaman, Graham Homer, was knocked to the floor. The committee described Norton's contact with the lineaman os "auxidable up. with the linesman as "avoidable, un-necessary and reckless".

Rugby Union
ENGLAND UNDER-21 TEAM (v Wales Under-21, Worcester, 20 Feb): M Horak Laicester; P Sampaon (Waspa), J Pritchard (Bath), M Other (Onell), L Lloyd (Laicester), J Wilderson (Necester), M Wood (Waspa): M Worsley (Bristol), A Long (Bath, capit), Y Heritand (Coverny), J Beardshew (Waspa and Loughborough University), J Browning (Bristol), J Cockle (Moseley), L Moody (Laicester), J Worsley (Waspa), Replaceth, J Leweny (Bristol), T Yapp (Betürd), P Richards (London Irish), A Kershew

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(Lordon Irish), R Rawlison (Orral), E Webb (Leicester and Loughborough University), J Winterbottom (Waspe).
ENGLAND STUDENTS (v Wales Students, Blackheath, 20 Feb): J Pablan (Exeter), S Lagg (Durham), A Blowell (Cambridge), B Radge (Corford), N Eagles (Loughborough), M Moore (Crew & Aleager), R Ashtorth (Cambridge), D Waleder (Durham), J O'Rellly (Manchester), B Harvey (Brunel), D Barries (Durham), T Robbinson (Brisch), R Protherough (Loughborough), A Reuben (Oxford), I Peel (Brunel), M Mülls (Sheffield), J Marston (Newcaste), W Fuller (Loughborough), M Orster (Oxford), M Corrish (Loughborough), R Besttle (Northumbria).

SHOOKEY

REGAL SCOTTISH OPEN (Aberdeen)
First round: D Dale (Wal) by B Jones (Eng)
5-3; S Judd (Eng) by M Stevens (Wal) 5-4;
M Bennett (Wal) bt I Bourby (Eng) 5-5; D Firnbow (Eng) by D Clarke (Eng) 5-2; P McCullagh (Eng) bt J Johnson (Eng) 5-3; G
Greene (Eng) bt J Johnson (Eng) 5-3; G
Greene (Eng) bt M Walker (Eng) 5-2; D
O'Kane (M2) bt J Woodman (Eng) Wo; E
Handerson (Sco) bt M Dolewalloveski (Sco)
5-3; L Gmfin (Eng) bt A Davies (Wal) 5-2;
S Storey (Eng) bt J Birch (Eng) 5-3; N Psarce
(Eng) bt J McCulloch (Eng) 5-3.

AROUND THE RESORTS

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(GB) 15-10 17-16 7-15 15-7; M Heath (GB) bit T Hands (GB) 12-15 17-16 15-14 15-8; S Casteleyn (Bel) bit M Caims (GB) 9-15 13-15 15-7 15-11 15-12

Tennis

ATP TOURNAMENT (San Jose, Cally Sec-ond round: T Martin (US) bt J Ondina (Bra) 5-3 7-6; J van Lottum (Netht) bt V Spadea (US) 7-6 6-7 6-2; P Sempres (US) bt J Buri-lo (Sp) 6-3 7-6; M Woodfords (Aus) bt M Washington (US) 7-6 7-5. DUBAI OPEN Guarter-finals: W Ferreta (SA) bt N Kierler (Gar) 6-3 6-2; J Bjorloman (Swe) bt C Moya (Sp) 7-6 6-1.

(Swe) bt C Moya (Sp) 7-6 6-1

DAVIS CUP Euro/African Zone Group One
First round: Finland v Crostia (Heisinid):
V Lukto (Fin) bt I Ljubicic (Croe) 4-6 6-4 756-4. Ukraine v Denmark (Key): K Carisen
(Den) bt A Rybalko (Ikr) 6-2 7-6 6-3; F Feiterin (Den) bt A Medwedev (Ikr) 8-3 8-4 75. Asia/Oceania Group One First round:
Uzbekistan v China (Reshkent): V Kutsento(Uzb) bt Yu Wewrang (Ch) 8-2 6-3 6-1; O
Ogorodov (Uzb) bt Yu Zhang (Ch) 6-1 2-6
6-1 8-4.

6-1 6-4.

LTA MEN'S TOURNAMENT (Chigwell) Ouarter-finals: R Matheson (GB) bt M Begraver (Neth) 7-6 7-6; A Pretzsch (Ger) bt M Navarra (II) 6-4 6-2; D Van Utrislen (Bel) bt K Flygt (Swe) 7-6 6-4; F Loven (Swe) bt M Heilstrom (Swe) 6-3 5-7 6-4

LTA WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT (Birminghem) Semi-finals: J Pullin (GB) bt M Persson (Swe) 6-2 6-2; J Ward (GB) bt G Am (GBr) 6-3 7-6.

TODAY'S NUMBER

27

The number of professional heavyweight boxing matches won by the former Houston Oilers and Dallas Cowboys runningback, Alonzo Highsmith, who knocked out Martin Lopez in the second round of their fight in Houston on Thursday night. Highsmith, who weighed exactly 17st for the bout, is unbeaten since switching sports.

SNOW REPORTS

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كذا عن ألاصل

United States

Luis Hernandez scored a golden goal in sudden-death extra time on Thursday to give Mexico a 1-0 win over Jamaica and a place in tomorrow's Concacaf Gold Cup final. They will face the United States - unexpected winners over Brazil in the other semi-final on Tuesday.

Hernandez could have won it for Mexico with just two minutes to go in normal time, but his powerful header hit the bar with Jamaica's goalkeeper, Warren Barrett, well beaten. But he made no mistake with another forceful header late in the first period of extra time in front of 45,507 fans in the Los Angeles Coliseum.

The result was a disappointment for the Reggae Boyz" of Jamaica, who had surprised many fans by winning their first-round group in the tournament. They had been beaten 6-0 by Mexico in a World Cup qualifying match last year, but later held the Mexicans to a 0-0 draw in Kingston.

In tomorrow's third-place match, which precedes the final in the Coliseum, the Jamaicans face Brazil, with whom they drew 0-0 in their opening match at the tournament. The world champions have also been beld by Guatemala and have only managed to beat El Salvador at the Gold Cup.

Brazil

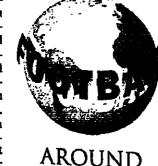
Ow

Tuesday's Gold Cup semifinal loss to the United States caused some serious indignation back home in Brazil.

"A defeat to be ashamed of," pread a headline in the Rio de Janeiro newspaper O Globo after Brazil's first defeat to the Americans.

"Nightmare in the wee hours," declared the sporting daily Lance, referring to the game's 2am starting time in Brazil. "What nobody believed could happen, happened."

However, more sober observers did put the defeat in perspective. Although Romario was on the field, and was reg- the quarter-finals starting on ularly thwarted by a brilliant Friday.



AROUND THE WORLD **RUPERT** METCALF

display from the Leicester City goalkeeper, Kasey Keller, Brazil were without Ronaldo and about half of their regular starting line-up.

Berti Vogts, the coach of Germany, whose side meet Brazil in a friendly in Stuttgart on 25 March, said: "What the Brazilians were doing in the Gold Cup was having a holiday. They have the best team of all time. They don't play football, they celebrate football."

Burkina Faso

The biggest shock so far at the African Nations' Cup in Burkina Faso came on Thursday, when unfancied Togo beat one of the favourites for the title,

Mohamed Coubadja-Touré struck a spectacular solo goal in injury time to give Togo a 2-1 win in a first-round Group B fixture. Franck Doté had given Togo the lead in the 26th minute and, thanks to a brilliant display from their goalkeeper Nibombe Waké, they held out until Samuel Johnson equalised

with an 83rd-minute penalty. The Nations' Cup holders, South Africa, have been in poor form so far, having been held to draws by both Angola and Ivory Coast. The group fixtures conclude on Tuesday, with



Tomorrow Japan play their first friendly since they qualified for France 98 by beating Iran in an Asian Zone play-off in November. They meet Australia in Adelaide, in what is widely expected to be Terry Venables last match in charge of the Socceroos. His Japanese counterpart, Takeshi

Okada, has a squad of 40 players all desperate to make the final World Cup squad of 22. J-League, many of the players may not be at their peak just yet but the competition for places in the final World Cup team is enough motivation to spur the strength was the most worrying aspect for his side as they pre-pared for tomorrow's match.

Sandinista OB tie crucial for Gaffer

CLUB chairman Sir Hirem Firem continues in charge of Sludgethorpe Brazil today mid conflicting reports from the Central American jungle over the fate of football kommissar Barry Gaffer.

Earlier last week it was feared the 54-year-old had been killed when a body was washed up at the mouth of the Rio Tinto, so named for the number of bloodied bodies dumped in it during the recent civil war. However, that proved to be a referee's assistant and Gaffer was later discovered to

In a classic example of the Stockholm Syndrome, which holds that kidnap victims grow to like their captors. Gaffer is reported to be coaching the guerillas' football team with considerable success. He is still being held captive but a former rebel insider, now a high-ranking torturer in the state Ministry of Truth, said Gaffer could be freed if his team win the Guevara Cup against the Sandinista Old Boys this afternoon.

If they lose, however, he will be killed as Brazil's "Save the Gaffer Fund", formed to raise the £1,000.000 ransom demanded for their manager, has been closed with a debt of £430,000. The follows the disastrous fund-raising dinner on the Sludgethorpe Canal which ended with the boat sinking after Luciano Pavarotti was belicoptered on board to sing Nessum Dorma as the finale. No lives were lost but the cost of the boat, and the £250,000 of jewellery Lady Firem, the



THE GAFFER

chairman's wife, claimed to have lost, wiped out the fund. Sir Hirem Firem, who has steered Brazil off the bottom of the table with two wins in a week as manager, said: "we are all crossing our fingers for Barry but we have to concentrate on our own life and death struggle at the wrong end of the Premiership". Sir Hirem refused to comment on rumours that the £430,000 was being deducted from Gaffer's wages, nor that he intended managing the club permanently regardless of Gaffer's fate.

Sir Hirem did say that both Ivor Niggle and Shaun Prone would be rested today as the little green men he met at the petrol station had told him they looked tired.

Instead he will play his nephew, Nepotate Firem, and Broccoli Moore, who has been released on bail pending his appeal against assaulting a police officer's house with a Christmas



On your bike: The good ladies of Burkina Faso at the African Nations' Cup opening ceremony in Ouagadougou

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

 It was not an easy decision to take, I can tell you that. Opinions were quite split.
 François Carrard, IOC director general, on the decision, later reversed, to take away Ross Rebagiati's snowboarding gold medal after he tested positive for cannabis. Ross deserves that medal, man, it was builshit to take away the gold from him for a little joint. He had the biggest rush of his fife and crushed the opposition. Daniel Franck, Norwegian snowboarder.

 We had a party, we had fun, something got broken. It's not cool, but it happened. Martin Freinademetz, Austrian world champion snowboarder, after being thrown out of the Olympics following a wild party in a hotel lobby, after which he "borrowed" an official snowmobile.

 A player of ours has been proven guilty of biting - that is a scar which will never heal Andy Robinson, Bath coach, on the Kevin Yates ear-biting affair (following which, presumably, the scar of victim Simon Fenn will also never heal).

 Tve always liked it that my career best has been in a Test match. It really means something, and I've always said that if I got near to doing it in a county match i would throw the ball to someone else. Angus Fraser, England bowler, after taking 11 wickets in the second Test.

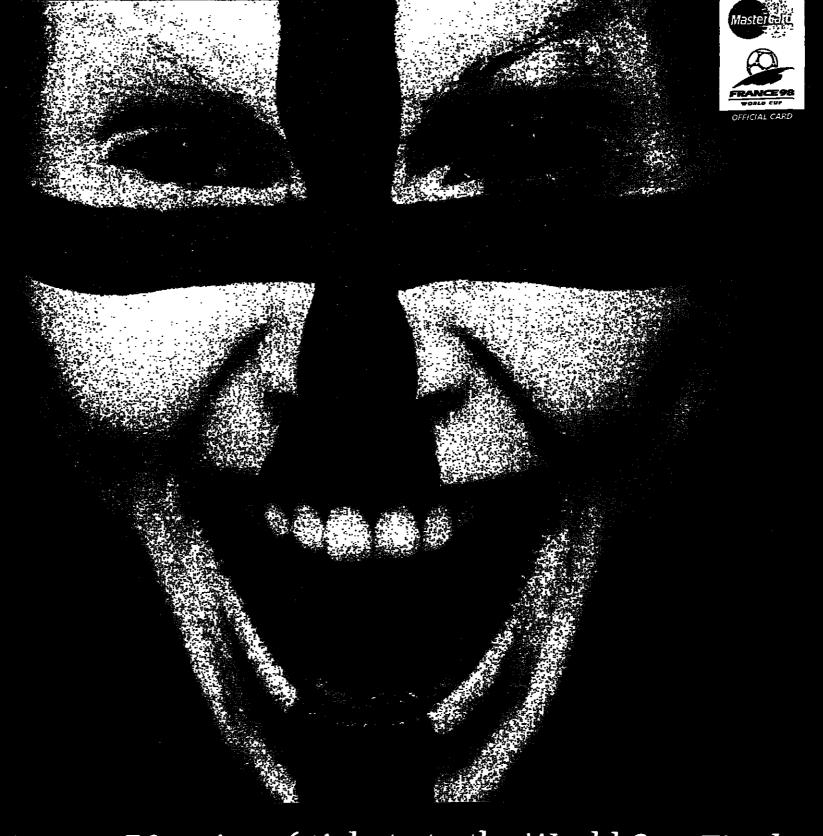
For an 18-year-old, he has a lot of arrogance about him. But he's special and we must keep his feet firmly nailed to the floor. John Aldridge, Tranmere Rovers manager, on his club's young goalkeeping prospect, Steve Simonsen.

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'Honest' Sutton strikes back at snipers

By Alan Nixon

CHRIS SUTTON said vesterday at Wembley instead." that he still wants to play for his play for the England B team.

don't want to play for England," want to. All I tried to say was the World Cup.

"Glenn Hoddle [the England right for me." coach] does not appear to rate

me, or he would have been giv- considers that he should have past two seasons to qualify for

Sutton feels that people see country. The Blackburn Rovers his decision as mere petulance. striker spoke out after a week of "This is nothing to do with criticism of his decision not to suggestions made in some quarters that I think I am too good "At no time have I said I for the B squad," he said.

"I was not being arrogant, I Sutton said. "I would love to am not trying to pick the team. play for my country and still I have no regrets about what I did. At least I was being honthat I don't believe that playing est about it. I could have preagainst Chile's B team would tended I had an injury and just further my chances of going to ducked out. Others have done that in the past, but it was not

One of the players Sutton

ing me a game on Wednesday been facing, Marcelo Salas, has clearance. Ricard has played in deal ties Salas, who scored both goals in Chile's defeat of England, to Lazio until 2006. The two-year period. 23-year-old River Plate striker, target for Manchester United.

Middlesbrough face a struggle to obtain a work permit for for the former England inthe Colombian striker Hamilton ternational, but said that he Ricard. The Department of would consider selling him. Employment stipulates that a player from a non-European former England full-back has ac-

signed for Lazio for £13m. The only 10 of Colombia's 20 com-

Liverpool are open to offers South America's Footballer of for the 29-year-old defender the game about the level of stewthe Year, was previously a Neil Ruddock The club's man- arding and the small police ager, Roy Evans, denied that West Ham had made an offer

Lee Dixon, the 33-year-old, Union country must have cepted an offer to stay at Arseplayed in 75 per cent of com- nal for a further season. His

to take no action against Portsmouth following the pitch petitive games, including six attack on the linesman Edward World Cup qualifiers, over a Martin by a Sheffield United supporter two weeks ago.

There were criticisms after presence at Fratton Park. However, after carrying out an investigation into the attack, which left Martin unconscious, the FA is not be taking the matter any further.

"We have made inquiries into the events and are satisfied not only that all reasonable pre-

The Football Association is but also with the general safety policy at the ground," Steve Double, the FA spokesman, said. Football League clubs will

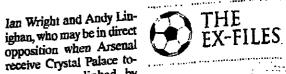
decide in April on radical restructuring plans that could include reducing the First Division to a "super league" of 12 sides and changing the number of teams relegated and promoted from each section.

Club representatives met vesterday in London to discuss the proposals, which were first put forward at a meeting in December. No final decisions were made, but also under consideration is increased promotion petitive internationals in the contract was due to end in June. cautions were taken on the day, from the Vauxhall Conference.

SIDELINES

Heroes on mission to blast the past

morrow, are linked by



something altogether more curious than the fact that each will be striving to knock out the club whose last great FA Cup memory they provided.

The year is 1993. Wright, who had struck twice in Palace's 3-3 draw with Manchester United at Wembley three years earlier, repeated the feat in Arsenal's final against Sheffield Wednesday, making light of a broken toe to score in the first game and the replay. Then, in stoppage time of extra time of the second game, Linighan ignored the pain of a broken nose to head the Gunners' winner.

George Graham, who also played for both clubs, promptly brought Eddie McGoldrick from Selhurst Park to Highbury. Arsenal had previously prised Kenny Sansom and Peter Nicholas from the Eagles' would-be "Team of the Eighties", the former in exchange for Clive Allen and Paul Barron. Allen, newly signed for £1m from QPR, had not kicked a ball in anger for the north London club.

David Price and George Wood exchanged N5 for SE25 around the same time, following a path well worn by a succession of Arsenal stalwarts dabbling in management. Between 1947 and '54, Jack Butler, Ronnie Rooke and Laurie Scott all found that myriad medals and caps were no guarantee of success at Palace. Indeed, Scott's reign included a plea for re-election to the Third Division (South) as well as Cup defeats by Finchley and Great Yarmouth.

> Ten things that Chelsea's Nigerian Celestine Babayaro might be missing today



I The night life of Lagos. Much like the King's Road, but more music, bars and excitement and less Sloanes and expense. gos. famous for its 2 Hopping on a choba motorbike taxi-at the end 6 Oshbogo's Sacred Forof the night. Speedier and cheaper than a black cab and none of the chirpy cabbie hanter to contend with. 3 A glass of ogogoro – distilled palm wine with the potency of missile fuel. 4 The recently discovered gorillas of the southeast forests. Like Chelsea championship prospects, decisions that no one reno one thought the goril- ally understands. Sounds las existed until recently

and there are doubts about their future. 5 Lekki beach, east of Lacoconut trees.

est - a spirit shrine. 7 Nigerian Guinness, with eight per cent alcohol. 8 Dodo - fried plantains. 9 Igbin – snails with chilli. 10 Living under a regime that is never short of excitement, even though at times the mysterious ruling powers make surprise



Southampton's nickname dates back to their foundation in 1885, when most of the orginal members belonged to the young men's association of St Mary's Church. At their first meeting the church's curate was elected club president. The club's original name was Southampton St Mary's.

familiar.





On 14 February 1995, Eng- The FA Cup tie between Aslish football witnessed the ar- : ton Villa and Coventry City rival of a Dutch footballer today recalls their meeting 52 who many believed would be : years ago in one of the coma great influence on the Prepetition's most memorable seasons. With League foot-

The Arsenal manager. lieved would be 'the perfect ! winger' - Glenn Helder.

years ago, another Premiership club, Coventry, sacked their manager, Phil Neal. Ron Atkinson was immedi- Villa 2-1, but three days latately touted as his replace- er their First Division op-

Unfortunately for Arse- winning 2-0 at Villa Park nal and Helder, time proved: that the signing was not so : round to the eventual wininspired. Unfortunately for ners, Derby County, who

ball not resuming for anoth-George Graham, revealed er year, the 1945-46 FA Cup that he had completed the drew huge crowds as life got signing of a man who he be- back to normal after the war. Every round from the first to the quarter-finals On the same day three was played over two legs. In the third round Coventry (then of the Second Division) won the first leg against

ponents went through by

Villa went out in the sixth Coventry, Atkinson fared beat Charlton 4-1 in extra time in the final.

Andy Melville (defender) Sun-derland to Bradford City

Johnsthan O'Connor (defender)

Nigel Gleghorn (midfelder) Burn-ley to Northampton Town

Michael Mahoney-Johnson (for-ward) Queen's Park Rangers to Brighton and Hove Albion

John Mullin (forward) Sunderland-to Preston North End

Tony Parks (poalkseper) Burriey to Doncaster Rovers

Wayne Phillips (midfielder) Wrex-ham to Stockport County

Tony Philliskirk (forward) Cardiff City to Macclesfield Town

Richard Hunford (defender) Burn-ley to Dunfermine Athletic

Kim Heiselberg (defeder) Sun-

derland to Esbjerg (Den)

Everton to Shelfield United John Comforth (midfielder) Wy-combe Wanderers to Peterbo-

combe Wanderers to Pe

rough Utd

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

Transfers Free transfers or undit unless stated Callium Davidson (defender) St Johnstone to Blackburn Rovers (£175m)

Matt Jansen (forward) Carlisle Utd to Crystal Palace (£tm plus appearance increments)
Wayne Burnett (midfielder) Huddersfield Town to Grimsby Town dersfield 7 (£100,000) Franz Carr (winger) Bolton Wan-derers to West Bromwich Albion

John Hills (defender) Everton to Blackpool Tony Elliott (goalkeeper) Cardiff City to Scarborough Jon Connelly (goalkseper) lps-wich Town to Albion Rovers

Loans/trials

Stig Johansen (forward) Southamoton to Bristol City Guy Branston (defender) Leices-ter City to Colchester Utd

Andy McCondichle (goalkesper) Celtic to Hamilton Academical Contributors: Phil Shaw, Nick Harris, Paul Newman Communions: First States, Faults, Fault recomment.

Readers' contributions welcome. Send to Sidelines, Sports Deak.

The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E145DL. e-mail address: sport @ independent.co.uk

Harford prepared for a rough ride at the Hawthorns

By Bill Pierce

RAY HARFORD will not be could be ready to return. unnerved by the expected hostile reception at the Hawthorns "Judas" for walking out on the today can kick-start their season. club just before Christmas.

challenging position, but having refused to sign a contract. something to build on." When the chance came to return to his native London after QPR sacked Stewart - a week after the Australian Houston, Harford jumped at it, striker claimed he has been vicand left bitter recriminations behind in the Midlands.

man, claims he had a gentle- he's committed to the club," men's agreement with Harford and has declared that he will not he able to bring himself to even talk to him at today's match.

"The chairman is just trying what the position always was." Harford said. "I enjoyed my ficult decision to leave, but af- wich three days earlier. ter a long spell up north I was

home in Surrey." Albion have drifted out of boots." the promotion play-off zone half-way in the First Division.

The England B midfielder programme. Nigel Quashie has added to his

Hawthorns. However, George Kulcsar and Simon Barker

Alan Ball believes his Portsmouth side are still good from West Bromwich Albion enough to avoid relegation and fans who have labelled him a that victory at Crewe Alexandra

Ball, searching for his first They can boo as much as win since returning to Fratton they like, because it won't wor- Park as successor to Terry Fenry me," the Queen's Park wick, admitted this is a vital Rangers manager said yesterday. match but pointed out: "Crewe Harford left Albion after like to play football, which will steering them to a promotion- allow us to play our passing game. A first win will give us

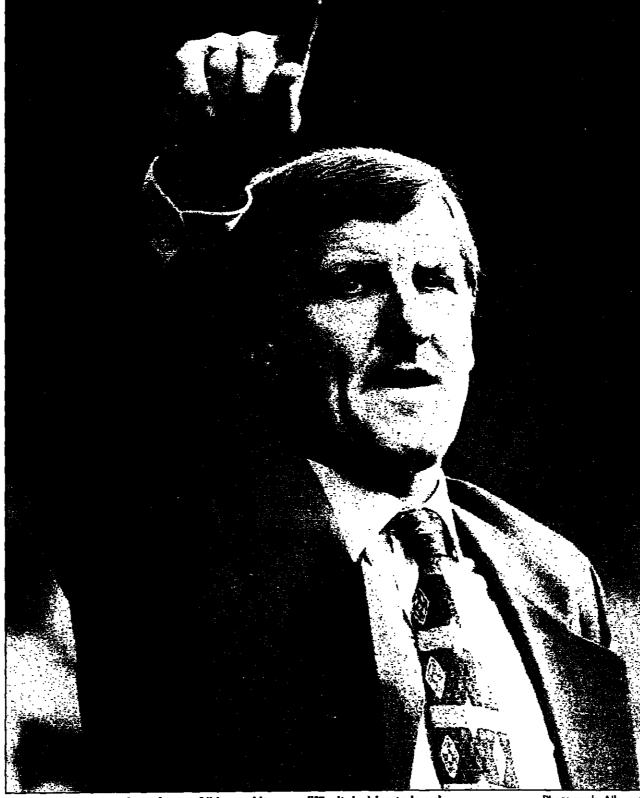
Ball will give John Aloisi his first start since being appointed timised since Terry Venables left. "I've had a good chat with Tony Hale, the Albion chair- John and am perfectly happy

Manchester City could be without Georgi Kinkladze against fellow strugglers Bury in the vital Maine Road derby. to protect himself. He knows Kinkladze needs a late test after playing for Georgia in Malta on Tuesday, despite being time at Albion and it was a dif-stretchered off against Nor-

"We were happy for him to still sick of spending my life dri- go, but with his ankle injury we ving up and down the motorway. didn't expect him to play,", I needed to be working near my Frank Clark, the City manager, said. 'He didn't even take his

Middlesbrough can rea since Harford departed, but he the First Division leadership has not yet been able to make from Nottingham Forest by a major impact at Rangers, beating Bradford at the Riverwho are still struggling below side Stadium at the start of a crucial three-match, eight-day

"The Bradford game is more problems by dropping out of the important than our Coca-Cola Albion game with a shin injury Cup semi-final against Liverpool that became infected after he on Wednesday," Bryan Robsustained it against Chile on son, the Boro manager, said.



Tuesday - ironically, at the "We must take three points." Ray Harford: 'I enjoyed my time at Albion and it was a difficult decision to leave

Evans aims to accelerate as the last lap approaches

By David Anderson

ROY EVANS, the Liverpool manager, has warned his players as they prepare to take on United. Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough today that the championship is entering what he getting towards the last lap." considers to be its most critical phase,has told his Liverpool players to roll up their sleeves a positive attitude."

for the title run-in. lust week's defeat against son despite fears from Evans Southampton, which ended that the teenager is on the fender, who he has confirmed their eight-match unbeaten run. edge of "burn out". Owen has but he claims the blow was soft- played 36 times for the ened by the fact that their rivals Merseysiders this season plus day manager, fears a Liver-

erpool, along with Chelsea and under-18, under-21 and the full Blackburn, are just five points international side. behind the leaders Manchester

Evans said. "We've got to roll up our sleeves again and show

Michael Owen is likely to Evans was disappointed by start his 40th game of the sea- also taking an interest in Jaap

Evans said the 18-year-old must put his fine full England de-"It's always important to but behind him and "get back to win at this stage now that it's work with the bread and butter stuff. "There's always a concern about burn out with a lad of 18 and we will monitor him very closely," he said.

The Liverpool manager is Stam, the PSV Eindhoven dehe is considering signing.

Ron Atkinson, the Wednes-

FA Carling Premiership: How they stand

have also slipped up lately. Liv- three games for his country at pool backlash after their 3-2 and he was simply fantastic on sults, like Tottenham winning at home bumiliation by

Southampton last weekend. "They'll be like wounded tigers," Atkinson said. "Liverpool are supposed to be having a nightmare but they have won eight of their last 12 games."

Martin O'Neill is confident can overcome the threat of Tottenham's danger man. David

Ginola, at White Hart Lane. "In Ginola they have a player who can be outstanding on his day," O'Neill said. "I saw Spurs when they were knocked out of the FA Cup by Barnsley

the night. But we are in a good frame of mind and will be going into the game with all guns blazing after winning our last two games."

Howard Kendall is urging his Everton side not to ease up and extend their fine recent record his rejuvenated Leicester side at home to Derby. They have lost only one of their last nine games, a run that has seen them move five points clear of the drop zone and Kendall land the manager of the month award for January.

> He said: "Last week some of the bottom sides had great re- States.

gap we've created between ourselves and the bottom three is pleasing. We've got to make that gap bigger, starting tomorrow against Derby. Jim Smith. Derby's manag-

er, is hoping the return of his wild card can deal Derby County a rare winning hand away from home. Paulo Wanchope. his Costa Rican striker, is back in the front line after missing last Saturday's home defeat by Aston Villa because of international duty in the United

Blackburn, but the five-point

Albion want more than an enjoyable day out

off their domestic worries today by making the most of fear them." a money-spinning Tennents Scottish Cup tie at Hearts.

The Third Division side's Cliftonhill stadium has again been closed down because of fermline. Cooper had a spell a faulty shower in the away dressing room, but their manager, Vinnie Moore, believes Dunder this week, replacing his players will be focused.

People say we should go there and enjoy the day." Moore said. But we will only enjoy the day if we get a win or a draw. Losing to Hearts would be no different to losing in the league to Cowdenbeath in my book."

Inverness Caledonian Thistle also aim to upset the worth in the top flight," their form book at the Coca-Cola manager, Kevin Drinkell, Cup finalists, Dundee United. "We will go into this them for the opening 20 mingame looking to score rather utes and build from there."

than trying to contain United," their manager, Steve Pa-Albion Rovers aim to shrug terson, said. "We respect them, but we certainly don't

Neale Cooper, manager of Third Division Ross County, hopes to put one over his old boss, Jocky Scott at Dunas a player there when Scott was in charge. Scott moved to John McCormack, who was dismissed even though the club are five points clear at the

top of the First Division. Stirling, who knocked Kilmarnock out of the Coca-Cola Cup, aim to emulate that feat against St Johnstone at McDiarmid Park.

"Saints have shown their said "We will look to hold

l							Ham	e				Awa	y		Form	Upcoming matches	
		.el	Pts	GD	W	D.	L	F_	Α	W	D	_ Ļ	F	A_	(inign no inspen team) .		
1	Man Utd	25	50	+33	Ю	2	. 1	33	. 6	, 5	3	4	19	13.	FWLTD	. \$6 Feb Aston Ville (A), 21 Feb Derby (H), 28 Feb Onders (A), 7 Mar Sheff Vied (A).	
2	Chelsea	25	45	+25	8	2	}	22	. 8	6	Ţ	7	30	19	LWLWL	21 Feb Lewester (A), 28 Feb Man Und (H), 8 Mar Aston Wils (H); II Mar C Pabue (H)	
· 3	Liverpool	∙ 25.	45	+19	9	3.	4	28	13	4	. 5	, 2	. 13	. 9	WDWDL	23 Feb Section (H): 28 Feb Asion Villa (A): 7 Mar Botton (H): M Mar Totterman (H)	
4	Blackburn	25	45	+17	8	3	2	30	S	4	6	2	И	12	DLWDL	21 Feb Southampton (A). 26 Feb Leicester (H), 7 Mar Barrelov (H), 14 Mar Everton (A)	
2	Arsenal	`24	44	→路.	9	2.	. 2	28	. 9	. 3	6	· 2·	16	. 17	DWDWW	21 Feb Crysal Palice (Hz 24 Feb Bellon (A); 2 Mar West Ham (A); 7 Mar Destry (H)	
6	Derby	25	39	+8	9	3	1	25	8	2	3	7_	H	23	LWDWL	21 Feb Man Utd (A), 28 Feb Shoff Wed (H), 7 Mar Arsenal (A), 15 Mar Leeds (H)	
· 7	Leeds	2 5	38	+6	5	3	4	17	: / 4 :	. 6	2	. 5.	Ū	4	DITML	22 Feb Newcaste (A); 28 Feb Southempton (H). 7 Mar Tottenlam (H); 15 Mar Derby (A).	
8	West Ham	25	38	+2	9	1	1	26	8	3	1	10	11	27	WWLDW	21 Feb Bolton (A), 2 Mar Arsenal (H), 7 Mar Crystal Falare (A): 11 Mar Man Utg (H)	
9	Leicester	25.	36	+6	4.	7	-3	H	- 11	. 5	. 2	4	<u> </u>	. 11	DDDWW	21 Feb Online (H): 28 Feb Ristitum (A): 7 Mar I lewcaste (H): 14 Mar Winbledon (A):	
10	Newcastle	25	32	-5	6	3	5	ß	15	3	2	6	Ю	15	LWLWL	22 Feb Leeds (HN, 28 Feb Everton (A), 7 Mar Lecester (A), Hi Mar CoveninyH),	
Н	Southampton	25	31.	-6.	7	ľ	4	19	И	2	. 3	8:	. 10	7	DWWLW	18 Feb Coverity (H), 21 Feb Backburn (H), 28 Feb Lead: (A), 7 Mar Everton (H)	
12	Coventry	25	30	-5	5	7	ļ	20	4	2	2	-8	9	20	WLDWW	21 Feb Barrolly (H), 28 Feb © istal Palace (A), 7 Mar Winddigdon (H), 14 Mar Newcosile (A)	
13	Aston Villa	25	30	-7	. 5	3	4	17	16	3	• 3	- 7	10	- 18	DDLLW	18 Feb Man (H): 21 Feb Winnsteller (A). 25 Feb Paristey (H): 28 Feb Liverpool (H)	
14	Sheff Wed	25	30	-11	6	3	4	21	19	2	3	7	16	29	DWWDL	21 Feb Tottenham (H), 28 Feb Derby (A); 7 Mar Man Urd (H), M Mar Barrier (A)	
<u> </u>	Wimbledon	24	29	-2	3	3	6	12 -	· l6	4	5	· 3	- 13	, j i	DLDDW	21 Feb Aston Villa (Hi, 28 Feb Barnsky (A), 7 Mar Covenby (A) . If Mar Arsens (H),	
╙	Everton	25	28	-7	5	2	4	17	16	2	5	7	13	21	WWWDD	23 Feb Liverpool (A), 28 Feb Newcastic (H), 7 Mar Southampton (A), M Mar Bluitsum (H),	
<u> </u>	Tottenham	25	26	-17	5	3	4	- 13	15	2	. 2	. 9	I	26	DLWLW	21 Feb Steft Wed (A), 1 Mar Bolton (H), 7 Mar Licet (A), 14 Mar Loursect (H),	
	C Palace	25	23	-16	G	4	8	7	23	5	4	4	4	И	DULL	21 Feb Arsenal (At 28 Feb Coventry (H). 7 Mart West Ham (H) If Mart Chelses (A).	
<u> </u>	Bolton	25	23	-13	3	7	2	10	12-	\top	4	- 8	12	29	LODLD	21 Feb West Ham (Hij, 24 Feb Arsenal (Hij, 1 Mar Tottenham (A), 7 Mar Liverpool (A)	
 -		25	22	-39	4		<u></u> -	— <u>—</u> —	22	1 2	_ <u>_</u>	10		39	WLWLD	28 Feb Country (A), 28 Feb Asten Villa (A), 28 Feb Winderson (H), 7 Mar Rudtern (A)	
20	Barnsley	ے۔		-57	<u></u>		<u> </u>	<u></u>		<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>		1	40 POS YVINDANO (HI, / Play HUMBAN (A)	

Why Owen's rise to the top is a statistical freak of nature

ANYONE who woke up to Virgin Radio on Thursday will have heard Chris Evans say: "A big hello to all the girls at Wembley last night, especially the 11 on the pitch", which was harsh. OK, it was a toothless performance by England, but the experimental value of the encounter seemed lost on Evans, who's become a football luvvie since befriending Gazza. So did the fact that Michael Owen, who Evans predicted would only play half the game because his mum was expecting him home by 9pm, came of age.

Liverpool's 18-year-old striker commanded almost as many column inches this week as Iraq's 61 year old president, and his performance justified the hype. But frankly, it's not so much Owen's emergence that's surprising as the fact the former England schoolboy sensation has emerged at this level at all.

It might sound a seathing in-dictment of the youth system in this suggests a really bright future, but country, but according to Mick who just can't take the final step, and Burns, chief executive of the Foot- others who struggle through the ballers' Further Education and Vo-early years but who easily make the cational Training Society (he runs grade. There's no logic to it." the clubs' youth training schemes) most England schoolboys don't

make it as professional footballers. There are 150 centres of excellence in the country registering back for Manchester United and 15,000 boys each, yet just 2,300 professional players. That is a success rate of less than one per cent.

Football, in other words, has one of the highest failure rates of any industry, a statistic that sounds less desperate when you consider that the hindsight: "So much happens to a late teenage years are traumatic for any boy, let alone a footballing ter 15 that it's almost impossible to prodigy. Both physical and mental el- gauge whether a schoolboy will ements determine who makes it and who doesn't, but Burns claims show up well during matches, but it's mainly "in the lap of the gods. I've when they move on, they don't naman at North-West Boys and at year as part of Howard Wilkinson's

Those who have made the grade in recent years include Nick Barmby, Phil Neville and the former Ryan Wilson, who wears Giggs on his Wales, but who once captained England Schoolboys at Wembley.

According to John Owens, manager of England Schoolboys for three years until the end of last season, it's easy to spot the stars - with boy in terms of his development afmake it. Some boys mature early and **OLIVIA** BLAIR



ROUTE FROM SCHOOLBOY TO INTERNATIONAL

have enough of an understanding of the game to progress. I worked with Robbic Fowler and Steve McMamatches. They caught up later."

You need application and dedication, as much as natural ability, to make it to the top, and Michael Owen is blessed with all three. That much was obvious to Owens, who watched the young striker score 12 goals in eight games for England Schoolboys in 1995.

But despite the high fall-out rate among 15-year-olds, Owens also expects great things of Michael Owen's contemporary, Wes Brown, a defender close to making the breakthrough with Manchester United. That's despite the fact defenders are disadvantaged because of the greater element of physique in their game than a striker's.

Lilleshall, the national school which nurtured Barmby and Owen, will be disbanded at the end of next

game. But not before it produces three boys from whom Owens expects great things: a midfielder attached to West Ham called Jo Cole who was the star of 1997's crop of schoolboys, and two from the current crop Liverpool's Chris Obrien

and Arsenal's Rhys Weston. But although schoolboy football is, by definition, a totally different ball game to the one played by the pros, there is one similarity - even the schoolboys do battle with Germany. In 1995, England's finest 15year-olds, Michael Owen among them, were humbled 4-2 by Germany. They were beaten again the following year, but got revenge last year in a 2-1 victory which suggests to Owens that the boys are doing better than they used to.

That's still not to suggest, however, that England Schoolboys will

15 they weren't up to full scale blueprint for the future of the ever wear proper caps. Nor does -21 level guarantee a full cap either: a fact that evidently preyed on Chris Sutton's mind. While Sutton's decision to pull out of the B squad cannot be condoned, the omens didn't look good. Football's record books are littered with the names of players who represented England at under-21 and B Level but no higher, among them Vince Hilaire, John Lukic, Garth Crooks, Paul Bracewell and Paul Davis, At least Sutton got one cap.

Unluckiest of all was surely Gary Owen, star of Manchester City's midfield in the 1970s. Owen hung up his boots holding the unwanted record for having won the most number of under-21 caps (22), but never a full one. His namesake's career will doubtless be rather more fulfilling.

MAJOR FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY 3.0 unless ateted

FA Cup fifth round

FA Carling Premiership Everton v Derby Sheffield Wed v Liverpool...

Nationwide League

First Division
Crewe v Portsmouth
by Switch v Hudderstett
Switch v Hudderstett
Manchester City v Bury...
Manchester City v Bury...
Manchester City v Bury...
Manchester City v Bury...

Second Division

3 Blackpool v Milwaii

14 Bournemouth v Chesterfield

15 Brentford v Preston

16 Bretol City v Glingham

17 Carisles v Walsai

18 Northampton v Southend

19 Othern v Intham

19 Othern v Intham

19 Othern v Intham

Second Division

Third Division

28 Rotherham v Shrewsbury 28 Scantborough v Exeter 30 Scunthorpe v Rochdale 31 Swansea v Peterborough 32 Torquey v Hull

Tennents Scottish Cup

Bell's Scottish League First Division

Second Division Clyde v Livingston
 33 Ctydebank v Stranraer. 34 Sternhousemur v Brecht

Third Division 35 Berwick v Cov East Stirling v Dumbarton GM Vauxhall Conference

Cheltenham v Stevenage..... 41 Leek v Hednes

43 Telford v Weeng. 44 Woking v Kettering **Dr Martens League** 45 Ashtord v Halesowen Town

TOMORROW

Second Division

FA Cup fifth round Bell's Scottish League



Mexico's Salvador Carmona (right) beats Paul Hall, of Jamaica, in Thursday's Concacaf Gold Cup semi-final in Los Angeles

East Fife v Queen of the South (20) ... Weekend fixture guide

FOOTball
3.0 uniess stated
RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division: Basmische v Boreham Wood; Bishopis Storrtord
v Dusitch (at Dagenham & Readmoge; Bromley v Bagerham & Reddondge; Cashalon v Welton & Herstram; Enfeld v Chestram; Graeeend
& Nordhiest v Sumon Uni; Harnow Borough v
Kingsznian; Heybridge Swifts v Hendon;
Korn v Stiencay; Berkhamsted v Molesey;
Borgrar Regis v Alucisenhot Town; Chertasy v
Uchninge; Grays v Wolangham; Hampton v
Whynelests; Leyton Permart v Barton Revers;
Romford v Groydon; Wernbley v Maidenhead;
Worthing v Leatherhead; Second Divisions,
Rahmo v Cheshurt; Bedford Rown v Bracknet, Carney Island v Barstead; Egham v Edovare; Horsham v Leighton; Hungerford v
Marlow; Matropolitan Palice v Wivenhoe;
Northwood v Tootra & Micram; Wealdisons
v Kriftwood v Tootra & Micram; Wealdisone
v Braintree; Windsor & Elon v Challant St Reser; Witteram v TBury, Thard Division; Astery
v Wingste & Finchey; Camberley v Wars;
v Yang; Southal v Kingsbury.
UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division; Altrinchan v Alireton; Barnber Bridge v Winshort;
Bestrop Auckland v Runcom; Byth Sparters
v Fradkey; Chorley v Garstsonugh Tinity, Colven Say v Barrow; Ernley Leigh RMI; Hyde
v Boston Und; Lancastis v Gulesley, Marine v
Spennymox; First Division; Astron Lidu v Rerinch Lidu v Whatley Bay; Mediock v Bradford
Lanch Lidu v Whatley Bay; Mediock v Bradford
Lanch Lidu v Whatley Bay; Mediock v Bradford
Lanch Lidu v Whatley Bay; Mediock v Bradford
Rovers v Gloucester Caty, Kings Lyrin v Hasirings; Rothwell v Dorchester; Stampourne v
Best Caty; St. Learants Stamponi v Porest
Bath Caty; St. Learants Stamponi v Porest
Stam Caty; St. Learants Stamponi v Porest
Stam Caty; St. Learants
Stampors, Pagest
Reunges v Bradfor; Resing Warnick v BleitReunges v Bradfor; Football ham, Hoor Green v Shepshed Dynamo; Page Backey: Recing Warwick v Blak-tangers v Brackley: Recing Warwick v Blak-tangers v Brackley: Recipy v Wisbect mat: Raunds v Solinut; VS Rugby v Wisbect mat: Raunds v Solinut; VS Rugby v Misbect emai: Raunda v Solinuli: VS Rugby v viscetti Southern Division: Baldock v Fisher Addet-southern Division: Baldock v Fisher Addet-tic, Cindentord v Hewant: Dartford v Beshley: Figet v Waternoonlier, Margete v Weston-super-Figet v Waternoonlier, Margete v Weston-super-figer, Newport (Gwest) v Withey; Tenhoritory rough v Fareharn; Yate v Newport (IoW). WARSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Divi-tion: Beckenham v Herne Bay (230); Cherham

v Erith Town (230); Corinthian v VCD Athlet-ic; Crockerhill v Cray (230); Deal v Turbindge Wells; Reversham v Folkestone (230); Green-wich v Centerbury; Hythe v Ramsgate; Lordswood v Sheppey (230); Slede Green v Mathematic Thomastermed v Swenty Furness. Whitstable: Thurneymead v Swenley Furness
UNILET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Horsham YMCA v Hassocks; Langray
Sports v Pagham; Littlehampton v Hallsham;
Pescelawer & Telscombe v Mile Dai; Portfleid
v Eastbourne Town; Fingmer v Chichester, Setdean v Annole; Selsey v Rechilt; Whitehawk
v Wick.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE v Wick.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE
Premiar Division: Boston Town v Wortton;
Bucknigham Town v Bourne; Cogenhoe v Potton; Desborough v Mirriese Blackstone; Eynesbury v Ford Sports; Northampton Spencer
v St Neols: Spaiding v Weitingborough; Stamtord v Long Buckly; Stoftoid v Ysubsy.
SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Backwell v Caine; Bideford v Bridgon;
Bristol Manor Farm v Emore; Chard v Odd
Down; Manor Farm v Emore; Chard v Odd
Down; Manor Farm v Emore; Chard v Odd
Down; Manor Farm v Embry, Tornigton
v Regnater; Weitbury v Barnsteple.
NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE
Premier Division: Armthoppe Weitars v
Shefffeld; Denaby v Pickering; Halam v
Glasshoughan Weifen; Hudrall v Curzon Ashton: Liveradge v Harfield Mart: Ossett Town
v Eccleshik Pornebract v Brigg; Seby v Arnotic;
Thuckley v Cassett Ablon.
NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First DiNORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Div Enclashit: Pornethract v Engl, deady v Theology v Casert Ablon.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Atheritor Colleries v St Helens; Blackpool Rovers v Newcastle Town; Chedderson v Saltord; Citheroe v Atherion Lt; Darwen v Saltord; Citheroe v Atherion Lt; Carwen v Saltord; Hesingdon v Maine Road; Kidsgrove v Werthigton; Mossilay v Rossendals; Nartheth v Heler Old Boys; Prescot v Glossop; Nauthell GM v Remsbottom.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: Newbury v
Gosport; Andover v East Cowes Vott; BAT
Sports v Lymington; Bemerton Heath v Eastleigh; Christifusch v Cowes Sport; Downton v
Tottor; Romssy v Brackerfurst; Whitchusch v
Aerostructures; Wendome v Portsmouth RM.

V Aerostructures; Wimborne v Portsmouth RN, JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier DI-vision: Bury Town v Stowmarket: Dass v Sud-bury Town; By v Watton; Reliestmann v Cacton; Febrstowe v Losesstoft; Great Yarmouth v War-boys; Histon v Goriston; Newmarket v Sohem; Sudbury Wanderers v Hasteed; Woothridge v Tiptree; Whotham v Harwich & Parkeston. v Tiptrae; Wrotham v Harwich & Parkeston.

NTERLINK EXPRESS NEID AND ALLIANCE.

Boldmare & Michaels v Peleal Ville; Halasowen
Harriers v Willenheit, Pershore v Sendwell Bo-Harriers v Willenheit, Pershore v Sendwell Bo-Harriers v Willenheit, Pershore v Sendwell Bo-Harrier v Willenheit, Pershore v Sendwell Bo-Harrier Reminds Lesque Cup third round:
Inclustrial Reminds Lesque Cup third round:
Inclustrial Reminds Lesque Cup third round:
Krypersley Victoria v Stratford; Octoury v Bridg-

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Billingham Town College ARNOTT INSURANCE MORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Billingham Town v Shildon; Consatt v Tow Law; Chook v Jersow, Durham v Murton; Gulsborough v Billingham Synthonia; Northallerton v Essington; Parmith v Bedington Terriers; Seeham Red Star v Morpeh; South Shields v RTM Newcastie; Stockton v Dunston FB.

Shields v RTM Newcaside; Stockton v Dunison FB.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Bucket Thistie v Brore Rangers; Cove Rangers Fores Mechanics: Frasenburgh v Clachneuoddin; Keltin v Eight; Louisemouth v Fort William; Naim Countly v Hursby; Petarheed v Rothes; Wick Academy v Deveronsels.

Salignoff: Rish LEAGUE Premier Division: Citionifie v Beilymens; Colevaine v Glentorsh; Crusanders v Portsdown; Glenston v Omogh; Lindeld v Ards. First Division: Bangor v Carrick Rangers; Delaitery v Newry; Larre v Balyclars; Linderady v Oungamon Swifts.

WELSH CUP Fourth cound: Aberystwyth v Bangor Chy (20); Carriers on Y Hoover Sports (230); Edible Vale v Newtown (20) (at Newtown; 31-bbe Vale v Newtown (20) (at Newtown; 31-bbe Carlot Fiel Carriff v Carrass (20); Knighton v Barry (230); Ten Pentre v ThS Llareamstraid (20); Hashspool v Rhy (230); Hashspool v Rhy (230); Hashspool v Rhy (230).

LARE LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF Riff-HARE LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF Riff-

(230); Westpool v Fhyl (230);
HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRE-LAND Premier Division: Firm Harps v Droghe-da (730); Sigo Rovers v Bohemiens (730); AVON INSURANCE COMPRIATION First Di-AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION VISION: Oxford Liki v Swindon (710).

Cricket SECOND TEST (Second day, including play tomorrow): Port of Spein, Trimidad: West Indias v England (2.05).
THERD UNOFFICIAL TEST (Second day, including play tomorrows: ka A v England A (40am)

Rugby League SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP Fourth round: Leeds v Castleford (30); Overden v Salford (30) (at Timum Hell). Rugby Union

3.0 unless stated ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE: Beith ALLEO DUBIBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE: Bath V Wasper, Bristol v Baracet's; Gloucester v Northernoon 201; Leisester v London Irish Pre-mieranto Teor. Blackheath v Rotherham; Lon-don Scottish v Cowarthy; Ornel v Exister; Walesfield v Badford (230); Waterloo v Mose-ley (215); Wast Harrispoot v Fytde (20), JEWSON NATIONAL LEAGUE ONE: Liverpool St Histors v Ottey (230); Lipdhey v Newbury; Mor-ley v Leads; Nottingham v London Walsh; Pacaf-ing v Harrogate (230); Rugby v Witerhedale; Worcester v Rosslyn Park (230), Two Norths

Aspetria v Nurseston (230); Birmingham/Soli-nut v Stourbridge (235); Kendel v Sedgley Park (230); Manchester v Preston Grasshoppers (251); Sanda v Luchied (255); Sterlieth v Hro-ley (230); Watsel v Wirmington Park (230); Two South Eartong v Herioty (235); Camberley v Ro-douth (20); Carlon v Brodgwater (230); Fascent v North Watsham (230); Metropolitan Police v Saher; Phymouth v Chellertham (230); Tabard v Weston-suprivator (255).

v Westch-Euger-Mare (2:5).

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE Pramier Division (2:30 mises stated): Bridgerd v Neath; Edbw Vale v Cardit; Pontypridd v Nexport: Seances v Lanes (30). First Division (2:30): Aberaton v Bonymen; Abertilleny v Cross Keys; Durvent v South Wates Police; Messing v Llandovery; Newbridge v Runney; Pontypod v Blackwood; Treorchy v Caerphilly; UWC v Marthy. wood: Treorchy v Caerphily; UWAC v Marthy.
TENNENTS PREMERESHIP First Dhyleion.
Curre v Heriots FP; Edinburgh Acads v West
of Scotland; Jed-Forest v Hawlot; Stifrig
County v Beroughmuin; Wattoriers v Melross.
Second Division: Biggs v Dunder HSFP; Gale
v Musselhurgh; Glasgow Hawls v Peeblen; Kelso v Kiricaldy; Preston Lodge v Kirimanock.
Third Division: Ayr v Aberdeen GSFP; Giertothes v Seldrit; Gordoniums v Grangemouth;
Stewarty v Glasgow Southern; Stewarts
Melville FP v Hillmont/Jordenhill.
Alth LEGEL Effect Division (2 3th: Relations)

Merwis PT V Interest Judician (2.30): Bellymera, v Constrution; Bladenok College v Dungarron; Delphin v Construti, Garryowen v Stremon; Od-Belvedere v Old Crescent; Young Munster v Tenerura, Second Division (2.30): Greyatones v Bactive Rangers: Instrutions v DLSP, Malsone v Sunday's Well; Monistionny Buccansers; Old Vistation; Vistor; Well. v Sanday's Walf; Monissiown v Buccanaers; C Vlostey v UCC; Skarries v Galwegians; Wa derers v Derry.

Hockey ESI. SOUTH Premier: Anchoriens v Tur-bridge Weiss Easteole v High Wycombe; Fars-ham v Winchester: Gord Court v Bournemouth; Hame Bay v Trojans; Maderinaed v Seclen-ham; Old Whitehitens v Windbedon; Purky v Ramgachis; Richmond v City of Portsmouth; Wolling v Chichester.

Wolking v Chichester
DTZ MBLAND Premier; Branvich v Edgbasten; Covertny & North Warwick v Kirelse; Hampton-th-Auden v North Staffact; Herborne v
Nothingham; North Notte v Olson & West Warwick; Northernpton Saints v Bossomitation
NORTH Premier: Durbam Link v Harrogala;
Formby v Sheffield Bankers; Neston v Norton;
Sosthont v Ben Bruckland: Swallhed V Chester;

BOXING: Professional Promotion (Hephant & Cestle, London). SNOOKER: Scottlish Open (Aberdeen). ADNAMS EAST Premier: Bishop's Stottlard v Isswich, Cambridge City v Peterborough Town, Cambridge Univ v Luton Town, Crostyx v Colch-ester, Sudbury v Clacton, **TOMORROW** Football west of England & South WALES Pre-mier: Beth Buccaneas v Bristol Livin; Exeter Univ v Whitchurdt; Swarsea v Chellerham; Taunton Valle v Robinsons; Waston-super-Mana v Clevedon. DR MARTENS LEAGUE Southern Division

SCREWFOX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division; Meksham v Twenton (3.0). WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier: WOMER'S HILL DIVIL. 2000 F 1920 DO CREATE SOCIETY SOCIETY SOCIETY SOCIETY FIGURE (22); Forcester v Trigers (22); Hightown v Ipawich (22); First Division: Bradition Swithersbank v Encionel (120); Loughborough Students v Celenistard Highway (230); Suciety and Bodens v Lalosester (1230); Wirthighton v Centerbury (130), Second Division & Michigan & Michigan & Property (130). Sion: Meksham v Twerton (3.0). HARP LAGER OF LEAGUE IRELAND Pre-Rugby League

plea v Cambridge City; Weavyn Garden City
v psavich:
WOMEN'S NORTH First Division: Chester v
Blechburn: Leytend Motors v Winnington Paric
Liverpool Sarion v York; Webson v Sheffield.
TRYSPORTS WOMEN'S THREE COUNTIES.
First Division: Bradenal v Sommig. City of Oxford v West Witney; Farmham Coromon v Milton Keynes; Heniov, v Willion Keynes II; Meidenhead v Oxford Univ; Newbury v Reading; Windoor v Ranelaghr, Wycombe Rye v Oxlord Hawks.

Basketbali

Ice hockey

SUPERLEAGUE: Bes chester Storm (630); Cardiff Devile (630); Bracknell Bees (70).

Other sports

(230); Sundériand Bedens v Lalcester (230); Winderdon v Centerbury (130), Second Division: Abridge v Busherts (20); Sherwood v Ealing (20); West Winney v Old Loughtonians (20); Wolfing v Poynton (20). ROVAL AL-FAISAL WOMEN'S MIDLAND Premier: Belper v Kettering; Hampton-in-Acon v Crimson Remblers, Leicester v Luson; North Statis v Pictwick.

WOMEN'S WEST Premier: Columit v Chal-SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP Fourth round (3.0): Barrow v Widnes; Batley v London (3.15): Elerborough v Hursier (at Workington): Featherstons v St Helens (4.45): Hallist v Hudderstield (at Thrum Hall): Kelghley v Wigen; Lancastire Lyrav Dewabury; Leight v Sreifedt; Rochdale v Beatlord; Swinton v York; Walkesleid v Warrington (4.0): Whiteheven v Hall (3.30). North Staffs v Pickwidt.
WOMEN'S WEST Presider: Cohwall v Cheicham; Leoninstev v Bournemouth; Rediand
v St Austet; Tauston Valle v Exeter; Valle v Exmouth.
WOMEN'S SOUTH First Division: Hempsteed.
& Westminster v Winchester; Hendon v
Southempton; Maidenhead v Dutwich; Reading v Horstern; Tuse Hill v Winchmore Hil.
WOMEN'S EAST Presider: Bury St Edmands
v Austract; Derehem v St Absrac; Herisdon Magples v Cembridge City; Welwyn Garden City
v (pawich)
WOMEN'S MORTH First Division: Chester v

Rugby Union ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE (3.0): Newcastle v Harlequins; Richmond v Sale WOMER'S INTERNATIONAL: England v Hockey

Hockey

NATIONAL LEAGUE Premier: Cartierbury v
Hourstow (II); Quildrand v East Ghratead (120)

to Broadweier School, Godelming); Oid
Loughtonians v Doncaster (20); Reading v Cannold (20); Sudhgate v Barbort (Ipera (20); Edington v Beeston (230); Enrist Divisions Busharts v Brooklands (20); Bournelle v Ostord Univ (230); Chalmsford v Surbiton (230); Frethrands v Isan (II); Glounester City v Lewes (130); Harlaston Magpies v Harrostasid & Weschnister (230); Hull v Bromley (20); Indian Gymdharta v Oxford Hawles (20); Drughtorough Sudienta v Warrigdon (230); Sheffield v Havert (230); St Albans v Stoupport (20).

BHA WOMEN'S CUP Fifth round: Cition Sociate Life v Chalmsford Highway (Boggar Bush 1030); Doncaster v Poynton (230); Harlaston Magpies v Tiough Sudienta v Ottor (1230); Union Colfield v Bactmel (1230); Wellon v Hightown (20); Welding v Addridge (130).

Basketballi

Basketball BUDWESSR LEAGUE Birmingham Bullets v Crystel Pelace (520); Chester Jets v Leicas-ter Ruders (530); Greater London Leoperds v London Sweets (50); Walford Royals v Wor-thing Bears (50).

Ice hockey

Other sports ATHLETICS: BUPA Indoor Grand Prix (NIA, Eliminateurs). ummynem). SNOOKER: Scottish Open (Abercieen).

We're sinking fast but whose hand is on the tiller?

WERE a tolerant lot down at Selhurst Park. What other supporters would accept the worst home record in the country with hardly a murmur of protest? Crystal Palace are on

course to become the first club in the history of the professional game in England to go a whole season without a home league win, yet even during Monday's abysmal 3-0 defeat by Wimbledon the only public expressions of discontent were a brief chorus of "what a load of rubbish" and, at the end, some booing and jeers, directed mainly at Steve Coppell, the manager.

Perhaps it's because we've been here before, as we contemplate our third relegation from the top flight in five years. In particular, this has unpleasant echoes of three seasons ago, when Alan Smith's collection of talented youngsters - it's still painful to imagine how a team including Southgate, Martyn, Armstrong, Coleman, Shaw and Salako could have been rele-Ron Noades.

around the question is not so Bent and Matt Jansen. much his dealings with the manager - Coppell and Noades have worked successfully together for many years - but how the two men (Coppell in particular) will fit in with Mark Goldberg, the moneybags fan who hopes to complete his £27m purchase of the club from Noades later this mouth.

When he apparently financed the purchase of Attilio Lombardo last year, Goldberg was hailed as our answer to Jack Walker. Recent weeks have made some of us not so

Reports that Goldberg may want to move Coppell upstairs and replace him with either Gerry Francis or Terry Venables (no thank you) must have unsettled the team, despite the loyal Coppell's refusal in this week's club programme to blame the side's form on speculation surrounding the future of the club.

Coppell's notes - "This is probably my last chance, and one of the few occasions, to speak about the takeover at Palace" - read depressingly have the backing of Noades. who, it seems, would continue to run the club on a dayto-day basis if Goldberg's addressed to Noades.

takeover goes through. now - with more than a third pick up the tab? of the season left and our Premiership future there to be sein the club's history, the man who returned to take over a floundering team a year ago and won us promotion, the victories at Everton, Leeds, Sheffield Wednesday and Tottenham earlier in the season.

The fact is that Coppell's appalling catalogue of injuries, tionwide League.

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CRYSTAL PALACE SUE DONATO

although this should hardly have come as a complete surprise after the club started investing heavily in ageing and injury-prone players.

Although we had little time to strengthen the squad after securing promotion via the play-offs last summer and the departure of David Hopkin was a cruel blow, our activity in the transfer market has been bewildering.

Since last summer we have signed only one player who had any previous Premiership experience, Paul Warhurst, who is currently injured (enough said). Apart from him, a staggering sum of around £12m has been spent on other players who had gated - went down after a sea- never played in the Premierson poisoned by the ship: Valérien Ismael, Yitzhak manager's disintegrating re- Zohar, Lombardo, Michele lationship with his chairman, Padovano, Kevin Miller, Neil Emblen, Jamie Smith, Her Ah yes, Big Rou. This time man Hreidarrson, Marcus

> Lombardo looked good when fit and Hreidarsson has settled in well, but of the rest the best that can be said is that the jury is still out.

> Zohar was so uscless that the chib released him after buying him for £1.2m less than six months earlier, while Ismael, a club record £2.75m purchase from Strasbourg (struggling at the bottom of the French First Division), was substituted after his woeful "defending" led to all three of Wimbledon's goals on Monday. Emblen, a 12m purchase from Wolves, seems to get into the team only when Coppell has run out of all other options.

The likes of Danny Wilson at Barnsley must be shaking their heads and wondering what they might have done given half the money Palace have spent on players. The supporters, meanwhile, are looking for answers to a number of questions.

Have all this season's new arrivals been bought at the instigation (or even with the approval) of Coppell? When like a valediction, though it is asked recently if he had been hard to believe he does not trying to buy two particular players (one of whom, Jansen. signed this week) he suggested the question should be

Has Big Ron (who, to be While few would deny fair, knows more about the Goldberg's right eventually game than the vast majority of to appoint the manager he chairmen) gone on a final wants, this is surely not the spending spree, expecting that time to rock the boat. Right someone else will eventually

Has Goldberg - perhaps having decided that if it is gocured or lost - he should be ing to be his money he might giving unconditional backing as well buy players he likes to the most successful manager been playing the ultimate game of fantasy football?

Or have Noades and Goldberg been working together, on the basis that they are a betman who inspired memorable ter judge of player than a man who played 42 times for England and has been in management for more than 10 years?

Answers on a postcard plans have been wrecked by an please to CPFC, c/o the Na-

Gullit departs with a bravura display

Ruud Gullit was by turns thoughtful, angry and emotional.

Glenn Moore reflects on another fascinating day of Chelsea politics

THE Chelse: manager thought he had done a grod job and, when he went into a meeting with the club's officials he thought it was to discuss his contract for the next few years. Instead he was asked to leave. "I had no inclination of what was coming," he said later.

That was David Webb in May 1993, dispensed with by Ken Bates after saving the club from relegation during a three-month "trial period". His dismissal did not even make the back pages of most of the following day's papers with Webb's brief statement buried amid speculation on his

Five years on the only similarity is the manager's surprise. Ruud Gullit held a two-hour press conference yesterday which was emblematic of the changes at Chelsea in particular and English football in general. The location was evidence enough, a dining club in Kensington just across the road from a Pizza Hut restaurant awash with images of Gullit, their advertising vehicle.

Inside the club almost 150 media representatives scrambled over sofas and tables, even standing on the bar itself, as Gullit held court. Some settled for watching Sky's live broadcast in the other bar, unable to see past the the 15 television crews that ringed the table where Gullit sat, elegant in a fashionably cut dark suit, flanked by his agents. A phalanx of photographers crouched below him and journalists from Europe and beyond waited on every word. The thought occurred that if only the International Sportsman's Club had been as busy in its previous guise, as Scribes West, Terry Venables would still be running it.

But this was an exceptional event, as Gullit made clear. "I have never been treated like this before," he said. "I am still in shock especially when you consider what I've done for Chelsea. I thought everything was going well. I am really disappointed, I had given Chelsea my word. It was a day I can't forget."

Gullit admitted to having had a sleepless night as he asked himself the reasons for his departure. But after 20 years in the game he had made the belated discovery that, in the world of football, even genius will not protect for ever.

There was a trace of the arrogance possessed by all great players when he said "After all I did for Chelsea", but generally it was a bravura performance alternately sad, shocked, bewildered and close to tears but also funny and thoughtful with the obligatory, but heartfelt mention of the late Matthew Harding.

There was anger also, not just as he recounted his version of events but as he traded accusations with Italian journalists who pressed him on his attitude to Gianluca Vialli. Then, bizarrely, it ended with handshakes and mutual expressions of "good luck" and "ciao" as the daily press ended their session and Gullit was ushered into yet another room for interviews

with the Sunday correspondents. Gullit is probably correct when he asserts that his exit is not just about money although that is surely a prime factor. There also appears to be a personality clash with Ken Bates, the chairman, a dispute over his commitment and methods and an awareness that the uncertainty over the future may hinder the grand plans of Chelsea Village plc.

Chelsea yesterday claimed it would have cost them nearly £3.5m a year to keep Gullit. Their rent-a-



quote "insider" David Mellor chipped in by calling Gullit "greedy". If true, and Gullit admits his open-

ing negotiating gambit was a request for £2m-a-year [£3.5m gross if he est paid manager in the country is meant £2m net] it looks that way but there is a mitigating factor and a dis-

Mellor said that Gullit "could bonuses, of about £750,000 per not understand that great players annum. earn more than great managers. He is not the only one. The high-

Ferguson had a long struggle, inolving a certain amount of brinkmanship, to get that out of the club plc's remuneration board but it generally believed to be Alex Ferunlikely to be United's highest guson at an approximate salary, inwage (quite apart from the fortune cluding hefty and well-earned

Facing an uncertain future: Ruud Guffit at his press conference yesterday - 'I am still in shock, especially when you consider what I've done for Chelsea' Martin Edwards, the chairman, has made from the club). Yet before Ferguson arrived United were perennial underachievers rather than the game's dominant force. Their current millions are due, above all, to his judgement and efforts.

Brian Clough, understandably,

was another who found it hard to accept his players were paid more than him and this was before the explosion in wages. Thus the Gullit prob-lem with Chelsea seeking to pay him as a manager, not a player-manager (Gullit, incidentally, claimed his salary, around £800,000, possibly

net, had not changed when he took on the management duties).

The dissenting factor is Chelsea's previous recognition that Gullit is not money-orientated. In August Hutchinson told me Gullit had not even collected his wages in his first two months at the club. "You look atter them," he had said," recalled the chief executive, adding: "He didn't come here for the money. He could have gone to Japan for that."

At that stage Chelsea seemed happy with a system which meant Gullit took training, picked the team and identified and interviewed transfer targets but left the nitty-gritty to Hutchinson, Graham Rix, the coach, and Gwyn Williams, the assistant manager. Now, in the wake of some poor results (Chelsea have won twice in nine) and internal dissension among players, they cite it as a reason to release him.

Gullit's lack of preparation has occasionally been exposed. He is an excellent reader of the game but he has not always been able to repair the damage done by poor team selection in mid-match. That he was also attending a coaching course in the Netherlands which appears specifically designed to equip him for the Dutch national coach's job did not

help.
While Chelsea's dissatisfaction has simmered for a while, the final act was swift. Last Thursday, said Gullit, he and Hutchinson met for the first time in three months to discuss the new contract. Gullit had previously asked for a delay, citing his imminent fatherhood and the need to concentrate on the team.

He asked for £2m [net_ rather than gross according to Hutchinson] just as he had in the summer of 1995. when asked to join Chelsea, and expected a counter offer as happened then when negotiations were concluded in 15 minutes.

"But they didn't offer me anything and didn't speak to me for a week about it. That made me suspicious. Then I found out about Laudrup and asked myself "what was going on?" According to Gullit, Laudrup

had been due to meet him and Hutchinson on Monday but had cried off as his wife was ill. Then Gullit heard he had been in London on Wednesday with Hutchinson, Vialli and Gianfranco Zola and been told Gullit was "too busy" to see him.

On Thursday Hutchinson turned up at Chelsea's Heathrow training ground. "He told me the board had made the decision [to sack me] and I told him he couldn't hide behind the board, that he knew about the meeting with Laudrup, and I left. I didn't know that Luca vi ing over until I read it on Teletext."

Gullit wished Vialli "luck" vesterday, which provoked a few laughs among a press corps which has charted the pair's estrangement for more than a year. He also set his successor an unwanted standard: "My target was the championship. With the material you have, you have to achieve this."

This may or may not include the much-admired Dutch defender Jaap Stam, of PSV Eindhoven, who Gullit said Chelsea were negotiating

to buy for £10m. Gullit's final meeting with Bates took place on Thursday evening, and was brief. "There was no way I was going to ask him to reconsider. There was no way back. He knew what was going on. It's about pride. I wanted to stay and finish things but now I know how these people really are maybe it's better that Î go now, rather than having to keep working. with these people."

Webb has expressed equally disenchanted views on Bates in the past but the chairman's decision to replace him, initially with Glenn Hoddle, has long been vindicated. Only time will tell if Bates' latest change of manager, his seventh in 15 years as chairman, is equally successful.

How much is a manager worth? Ruud Gullit's wage demands are not simply

CONTRARY to his protests, Ruud Gullit's departure from Stamford Bridge had everything to do with money, City experts said yesterday. The consensus, however, was not that the Dutchman himself was at fault for requesting £2m a year, but that the wage system as a whole needs restructuring.

Nick Batram, a City sport and leisure analyst, said that clubs were only just starting to realise that the wage spiral cannot be sustained. "Clubs are saying 'We're not going to have a gun to our heads," he said. He added that salaries have expanded too fast, and that in business terms, they are unsustainable.

The issue of managers' wages, however, is clouded by the fact that they are generally lower than those of the highest paid players at each club, despite the fact that ultimate responsibly for success lies with the manager, and the manager is arguably more valuable for his teambuilding skills than any individual player is for his ability on the pitch. The loss of a player as influential as

greed. City analysts say the whole business of football needs to change. Nick Harris reports fewer earning years and higher Roy Keane at Manchester United

has not halted the champions' progress, but the loss of Alex Ferguson, the manager, would not easily be overcome. The highest paid manager in

England is Newcastle's Kenny Dalglish, believed to earn £1m a year, while Ferguson is thought to earn £750,000 at United. At the top end of the British players' salary levels, Paul Gascoigne is estimated to earn £2m each year at Rangers.

Nick Batram said football is less a part of the business world and more an entertainment industry. As such, its big names are valuable as assets in themselves. "The producer of a motion picture is not going to earn as much as the main star," said Batram. That is one reason, he added, that players command higher wages than managers. Players also have

chances of career curtailment. Managers, said Batram, should be paid on the basis of what they achieve (and hence a club can afford), not on the grounds of perhaps unrealistic aims. "Everything above [a basic salary] would be a performance-related bonus," he said. It would not mean that Gullit would be unable to earn £2m a year, but it would be conditional on his fulfiling his potential. The Leicester City manager, Martin O'Neill, is believed to have a contract heavily weighted towards performance, although the extent of the practice throughout the came is not known.

John Barnwell, the chief executive of the League Managers' Association, feels managers should be aware that every club has its wage limit. "It would appear that Gullit's demands stretched Chelsea too far,

and that's why they have taken the step that they have. That's their decision, but it's a warning to people that it's not a bottomless pit."

However, Barnwell is supportive of managers being paid what they are worth. "They help put the team together, and without them the product might not be as good as it is."

Alex Fynn, the sports industry consultant who wrote the commercial blueprint for the Premiership. league, said that although £2m is an excessive basic salary for a manager to demand, it is the chairmen of clubs who are ultimately to blame. "What is happening is that wages are rising faster than income and chairmen are having to find money.

"They [Premiership clubs] have mortgaged their future on the basis of success in which the players call the shots." Ultimately, he said that high wages were not a problem for anyone except the owners of the businesses. "No one minds the money they're paid - colleagues or fans. Perhaps the only people who do, balance the books at the end of the day."

Vialli's overriding priority is to bring the team together

AS I write this, Ruud Gullit is Despite the exit of assembling the world's press in a London hotel to give his version of Ruud Gullit, Chelsea fan the extraordinary events of Thursday afternoon. He will, simultaneously, throw the club into a new state of turmoil, one which even the most battle-hardened and cynical of Chelsea stalwarts can scarcely

fathom or have anticipated. Gullit's role in the transformation of the club's fortunes, both on and off the pitch, cannot be underestimated. He inherited a team who, despite the best efforts of Glenn Hoddle, were still the perennial "sleeping giant". During his stewardship of the team, our scope appeared limitless, our financial and sporting goals sufficient to tempt the world's finest to leave the Italy, France, the Netherlands et al to

come to plain old Chelsea, SW10. Despite rumours of dressing room disquiet with the squad system and the now doubly ironic spat with Vialli, Chelsea won the FA Cup last year. Gullit's place in the pantheon

Andy Prevezer says the revolution must continue

of Chelsea heroes was assured. All was, and would be, forgiven.

This season, however, despite a falsely elevated position in the table and still in two cups, all has patently not been well. The players haven't looked happy, Gullit's team selections have become increasingly bizarre and once his contract renegotiation hit on its first public stumbling block Chelsea fans began to fear the worst was about to occur.

The club have been dragged once more into an unseemly spat with a fallen idol, conducted through the media. It's become another in a long line of Chelsea soap operas, with the irascible Ken Bates once more in the director's chair. Vialli has picked up the poisoned

chalice and one hopes, for everyone's sake, but particularly for him, that we emerge from this season with some tangible success. He is, without question, an immensely likeable and astute individual whose coaching credentials have, I genuinely believe, been noted prior to this débacle (and not merely as an afterthought). Bringing the team together after this unedifying

debacle must be his first priority. Sides will be taken in the coming days. There are those already accusing Gullit of "hubris", of believing himself bigger than the club, that his greed and arrogance have precipitated his own demise. And there are those who, as always, will blame the board for allowing the promise of Chelsea's renaissance to

be jeopardised. Either way, the revolution must be allowed to continue. The club, and all associated with it, have come too far to turn back now. As Ken Bates said yesterday, the King is dead, long live the King

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Blackburn aiming to repeat very old feat

Arsenal and Manchester United are left to spoil some dreams, of course, but the way the FA Cup is shaping 1998 is going to be the year when a long wait ends for one club.

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The fifth-round draw contained four teams who had never won the tropby, six who have not had their colours tied to the Cup in the last 40 years kind to us," Roy Hodgson, their and apart from the above mentioned, none who have succeeded in the Nineties.

Blackburn count the years as much as anyone. They were dominant in the Eighties and Nineties, collecting the Cup five times in eight seasons, only we are talking over a hundred years ago. Even their most recent triumph requires a long memory, 1928.

They travel to West Harn today, seemingly containing the ingredients to mount a successful run. Hard to beat - they have lost just four times in the Premiership - and with prolific scorers in Kevin Gallacher and Chris Sutton they are, at 7-1 yes-

terday, as good a bet as anyone. manager, said, "but, to resort to the old cliché, we are capable of beating anyone on our day."

Unfortunately for them, so are today's opponents. West Ham have won nine of their 11 League matches at Upton Park this season and if John Hartson could start scoring again, they would look the Wembley article.

The Wales striker has got two goals in 12 games after

A long-awaited FA Cup could be on the cards for someone says Guy Hodgson while Nick Harris (below) analyses the fifth round match by match

though, as he says, he will can get into the quarter-finals. "I'm adding hard work to my game now," he said, "and I've scored 19 goals in 30 games."

In today's other all-Premiership tie. Coventry, the winners in '87, have a far more depressing statistic to confront. They have never won at Villa Park although the way Aston Villa are playing the time could hardly be better.

Newcastle United's manager Kenny Dalglish proved to O'Brien and David Kelly.

beginning spectacularly al- be graceless in victory and near defeat against Stevenage happy to go through another but at least we should be blank Saturday if the Hammers spared too much vitriol at home to First Division Tranmere today, if only for the identity of the opposing manager.

Dalglish signed John Aldridge when he was at Liverpool and was rewarded with 50 League goals in 83 games and the atmosphere in the dug-outs ought to be wholesome. The sense of old colleagues meeting again will by a Tranmere team containing two former Newcastle players, Liam

as could be yesterday, "I have of money, crowds and ground not looked forward to a game more all season," he said.

Leeds may be more wary of Birmingham at Elland Road as they lost to Portsmouth at this stage of the competition last season and were beaten by Reading in the Coca-Cola Cup which suggests a weakness against First Division opposi-Robert Molenaar's return from a knee injury.

By any other criteria but the Wimbledon versus Wolves the ball out of his net seven

Aldridge was as relaxed as would be the visitors. In terms the West Midlands side are bigger, it is just what happens on the pitch that is unfortunate.

At least Wolves have grounds for optimism in the venue. Much has been made of Crystal Palace's weakness at home but Wimbledon have won only four matches in the League at Selhurst Park and tion. They are strengthened by one of those, technically, was an away fixture.

The man with arguably the least enviable job this weekend League position the Goliath in is Dave Watson who had to pick

Manchester United in October and has to endure a repeat visit tomorrow. "I played OK," he said, "but it doesn't really matter when the goals are flying in from everywhere."

If United do make extravagant amends for some ropey League form then the goals could come from unfamiliar places as their line-up is a secret known only to Alex Ferguson. In the last round, against names of Clegg, Nevland, Mulryne and Thornley and a similar conglomerate of fringe and first-team players is likely.

That would suggest Barnsley will repeat their performances against Bolton and Tottenham in getting better tral grounds.

times when Barnsley played results in the Cup than they did in the League. Which would be fine except that their manager Danny Wilson's priority is Premiership survival this season. "There's no prizes for guessing I'd prefer it the other way

round," he said. Crystal Palace know the feeling. Hopeless at Selhurst Park in the League they defeated the only other team in the Premiership not to have won the Cup, Leicester, there Walsall, their side included the in fourth round but probably are relieved to be meeting Arsenal at Highbury.

If they win there then anticipation will begin to beat strongly. After all, they would then be only one match away from the semi-finals and neu-

Aston Villa v Coventry

Aston Villa will check on the fitness of leading scorer Dwight Yorke and central defender Steve Staunton before the game. The two players have been under treatment for calf problems. Yorke, who has scored three goals in the last three games, picked up his latest injury at Derby County last weekend when he scored in Villa's 1-0 win. If Yorke is out, the manager Brian Little may have to consider turning to Savo Milosevic who refused to go on the substitutes' bench at Derby County last week. Little said: "I have to look at things and see what is right for the club."

Coventry City manager Gordon Strachan's 19-year-old son Gavin is in contention for his FA Cup debut. Injuries to Gary McAllister and Paul Williams and suspensions for Paul Telfer and Noel Whelan have opened the way for Strachan junior to step into midfield if called upon. He faces competition from the Republic of Ireland B international Willie Boland. There could also be a place in the Coventry attack for the Romanian World Cup striker, Viorei

Leeds v Birmingham

Best Cup years RU 1931, 56

Leeds should be boosted by the return from injury of Dutch central defender Robert Molenaar for this game against First Division opposition. Molenaar was forced to sit out last week's 1-0 defeat at Leicester with a twisted knee but has done light training this week, with his manager George Graham hopeful he will be fit. Graham, however, is on the brink of major disciplinary problems as nine players are one booking away from suspension.

Birmingham's Peter Ndlovu is set to start his first game since Boxing Day. Ndlovu is poised to join Nicky Forster in a new-look forward line as leading scorer Paul Furlong is beginning a three-game ban after being sent off at Reading last month, while new £1 m striker Dele Adebola is cup-tied having played for Crewe against Birm ingham in the third round: Manager Trevor Francis has to shuffle his midfield as well due to further suspensions. Chris Marsden is started ing a three-game ban having also been dismissed at Reading, while Steve Robinson will have to sit out the next two games having been booked at Elm Park.

Newcastle v Tranmere

W 1910, 24, 32 1951, 52, 55

Newcastle manager Kenny Dalglish expects to have a full squad to choose from, apart from right-back Steve Watson, who has a broken foot, and new signing Andy Griffin, who is cup-tied. Two other new recruits - Andreas Andersson and Gary Speed - are both available, the latter because he missed his old dub Everton's thirdround defeat by Newcastle through injury. Swedish international forward Andersson goes in search of his first goal for Newcastle since his 13m move to the north-east.

First Division strugglers Tranmere travel to Newcastle aiming to go one better than Stevenage Borough, but they will be missing recent signing Stephen Frail and Lee Jones, who both have knee injuries. There is also a doubt over Graham Branch, of whom Rovers manager John Aldridge said: "He didn't train on Thursday, but we'll have another look at him." Branch is doubtful after he injured his Achilles tendon in the midweek win over Swindon. The striker missed training on Thursday. Definitely out are striker Lee Jones and Stephen Frail, who both have knee problems.

West Ham v Blackburn W 1964, 75, 80. Best Cup years W 1884, 85, 86 1890, 91, 1928

Rio Ferdinand is hoping to recover from the foot injury which ruled

him out of the England B international against Chile on Tuesday. Ferdinand is not manager Harry Redknapp's only defensive doubt as David Unsworth is struggling with a hamstring injury and is unlikely to be involved. Paul Kitson has a groin injury, while his fellow striker Samassi Abou is suspended and Trevor Sindair is cup-tied. Goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko played a reserve match against Norwich yesterday and is available, but Craig Forrest is likely to retain

Blackburn have a doubt over winger Stuart Ripley. He has been unable to train for a couple of days after suffering a recurrence of the knee injury he picked up at Sheffield Wednesday in the last round. The worry over Ripley is off-set by the fact that two other internationals, goalkeeper Tim Flowers and striker Kevin Gallacher, have both been declared fit for the tie. Swedish striker Martin Dahlin, who has not started a first team game for four months, is back in contention after scoring twice in a midweek reserve team outing.

Wimbledon v Wolves

Best Cup years W 1893, 1908,

Wimbledon will be without Carl Leaburn and Michael Hughes, the outstanding players in their 3-0 victory over Crystal Palace on Monday. Leaburn, who scored twice against Palace, is cup-tied having played for his former dub Charlton earlier in the competition, while Hughes, the man of the match in Monda's game,, is suspended. Marcus Gayle is still on international duty with Jamaica, so Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear is likely to play Jason Euell and Carl Cort in

Steve Bull has been named in Wolves' squad. The long-serving former England striker is unlikely to play at Selhurst Park but is included to provide back up for Don Goodman and Dougle Freedman. Sirnon Osborn and defender Adrian Williams are in line for a place on the bench after recovering from injury. Robbie Keane is out after chipping two bones in his arm while on internationat duty with the Republic of Ireland's B side. Right-back Kevin Mus-Cat begins a two-match suspension and should be replaced by Mark Atlans.

...And statistics

Premiership is the premier attraction

creasing importance of the Premiership, it has been shown in the attitudes of clubs and supporters alike to this season's domestic cup tootball.

While some of the Premiership's bigger

clubs have used the Coca-Cola Cup as an oppor-tunity to play fittinge players, supporters have vot-ed with their feet when it has come to the FA Cup, Still widely acknowledged as the greatest football competition in the world, the FA Cup has been treated in some quarters this season as little more than a distraction from the main event.

Of the Premiership's 20 clubs, 18 have staged at least one FA Cup the this season and 13 of them have attracted crowds below their league average. The increases at the five clubs to have drawn bigger crowds for FA Cup ties have been less than five per cent with the exception of that at Coventry City, who drew a full house (17 per cent up on their Premiership average) for the visit of Derby County.

a drop of more than 24 per cent for FA Cup attena orop of more than 24 per cent for FA Cup attendances compared with Premiership games. Crystal Palace provide a graphic example. Their fourth-round tie at home to Premiership opposition, Leicester City, drew a crowd of just 15,489 to Selhurst Park. The home Premiership matches before and after that game, against Southampton and Everton, drew gates of 22,853 and 23,311

Even some clubs outside the Premiership have moved the FA Cup down their list of priori-ties. Middlesbrough, for example, desperate to re-gain the Premiership status they lost last year, rested players for their "glamour" FA Cup tie against Arsenal in order to have them in the best possible shape for a First Division match against State the following week

Stoke the following week.

surprises. With the honourable exception of Stevenage Borough, who knocked out Swindon Town and Cambridge United and took Newcastle United to a replay, the competition has provided few giant-killing stories this season.

No Premiership side has lost to lower-divi-

sion opposition this year (there has been an average of six Premiership giant-killings in each of the last five seasons) and even today the three teams at risk all have home advantage, Leeds, Newcas-tie and Wimbledon entertaining Birmingham, Tranmere and Wolves respectively. Leeds are hosting Nationwide League opposition for the

third round in succession, having already dis-posed of Oxford and Grimsby.

The luck of the draw has certainly been favouring Premiership sides, who have been drawn at home on 14 out of the 20 times they

Premiership clubs' average attendances 1997-98

	FA Cup	Premiership	Percentage difference
Coventry*	22,824	19,498	+17.1
Tottenham	28,316	27,098	+4.5
Chelsea*	34,792	33,536	+ <u>3.</u> 7-
Leicester*	20,608	20,394	+1.0
Newcastle*	36,705	36,691	0.0
Man Utd*	54,669	55,149	-0.9
		38,024	
Derby* 👼	27,992	28,695	-24
Blackburn*	22,402	24,451	8.4
Barnsley	16,631	18,457	-9.9
Aston Villa	31,364	35 <u>,61</u> 7	-119
Liverpool*	33,888	39,362	-13.9
West Ham	18,629	24,662	-24.5
Leeds	25,083	34,612	-27.5
Sheft Wed	17,324	26,833	35.4
Everton*	20,885	34,786	-40.0
Crystal Palace	13,556	23,298	-4).8
Wimbledon*	6,349	16,685	-61.9
Overall	24,816	29,008	-145
"One FA Cup match only		Stati	stics: Brian Sears

Playing tomorrow...

Arsenal v Crystal Palace

Grimsby's Mark Lever in the fourth round. When

Leeds meet Birmingham at Elland Road to-day it will be their third successive FA Cup

W 1930, 34, 50, Best Cup years

ian Wright (hamstring) will miss the game. The England striker appeared as a substitute in the 2-0 win over Chelsea last Sunday after missing four games and spending a week at a special fitness clinic in France, but felt trouble, is still out having withdrawn from England's match against Chile in midweek, but Ray Parlour has recovered from a foot injury he sustained playing for the England B team. With captain Tony Adams suspended, Arsenal could switch Gilles Grimandi from right back into the centre of defence, and allow fit-again Lee Dixon to return to the starting line-up. Stephen Hughes should keep his place in midfield as Patrick Vieira, back

from a two-match ban, has had flu. Crystal Palace's Tomas Brolin and Bruce Dyer pick themselves as Attilio Lombardo, Michele Padovano, Neil Shipperley and Paul Warhurst are still out injured, while Marcus Bent and new signing Matt Jansen are Cuptied. Jamie Fullarton is back from suspension. Simon Rodger, who played the fast 30 minutes against Wimbledon on Monday, is close to a return from injury, and Neil Emblen is pushing for a recall. David Tuttle, out since September with a broken leg, is also back in the squad.

Man Utd v Barnsley

W 1909, 48, 63, 77 Best Cup years

Ronny Johnsen and Brian McClair are ready to fill Manchester United's midfield gaps. Both Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes are suspended and there is also a doubt over David Beddham, who pulled out of the England squad more discomfort. Defender Martin Keown, another victim of hamstring this week for treatment on a hamstring injury. Andy Cole is also on the doubtful list after pulling out of the England squad in midweek. If Cole misses out then Ole Gunnar Solskjaer will partner Teddy Sheningham up front and the Norwegian youngster, Erik Nevland, could get another call-up to the senior squad. Henning Berg should return to partner Gary Palister in defence, with Gary Neville moving to his normal rightback position and brother Phil possibly starting where he finished off gainst Bolton last weekend in midfield.

Barnsley manager Danny Wilson will be without defenders Darren Sheridan and Darren Barnard. Sheridan completes a two-match suspension while Barnard starts a two-game ban, which could mean a place in the starting-line up for Steve Thompson for the first time since the Tykes' 7-0 thrashing at Old Trafford at the end of October. Striker Jan-Age Fjortoft is cup-tied so John Hendrie is almost certain to partner Ash-

UNFAIR PLAY LEAGUE FAIR PLAY LEAGUE LEADING SCORERS

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Kelly gone but never forgotten at Newcastle

Guy Hodgson talks to the veteran striker who could make his old club suffer today

Messiah, criticism is not a normal day-to-day problem but if Newcastle ever dared to have doubts about Kevin Keegan it was usually over strikers. Andy Cole's departure for Manchester United shook the city and, while the off-loading of David Kelly did not hit similarly high numbers on the Richter Scale, it did cause tremors.

A skim through the fanzines as Newcastle hit the Premiership in 1993-94 soon located a consensus that went on the lines of "if anyone else but King Kevin had sold Kelly there would be riots, but as it's him ". He had scored 27 goals in a season that hidepromoted Newcastle into the literationship and was developings a permership with a young striker called Cole.

Nevertheless he went to Wolverhampton, Peter Beardskey arrived in his place and any those have been for Tranmere potential dissent disappeared as Newcastle produced the viable task of replacing the irsort of foot-

only played elsewhere. Kelly was gone but not forgotten, getting an ovation from James' Park even in the most strained of circumstances: his appearance in a Sunderland shirt last season. Hе turns to Ty-

ceptable

ball their sup-

porters believed was

neside today Kelly: It will be a tremendous country in in a more ac- thrill to lead the team out at 1987 but never Newcastle as captain'

form, captain of Tranmere. the Stevenage saga in the delighted to be among more sympathetic spirits again, as Kelly definitely places himself. "Just because you're transferred, it doesn't mean you stop supporting them," he said.

Ask him whether being discarded by Keegan hurt and he hands out is his ferocious will says yes, but not so much that he holds grudges. "I've always got on with managers as well when I've left clubs as when I arrived. Being with Newcastle was the highlight of my career but I'm not a bitter and twisted sort of a person.

"I've always had the opinion if a club accepts a bid for - watched by Newcastle manyou then it doesn't matter whether you stay or go, you're probably surplus to requirements. I've no animosity to anyone who has sold me. Kevin had his own ideas about Newcastle and the Premiership and although I was disappointed to leave, it was just another part of football, another stage in my career."

stems from the fact Kelly has having a bone disease, Perthes, a tremendous thrill."

WHEN you are known as the a potentially crippling hip disorder. The treatment included two years with both legs in plaster and he was nearly eight. before he could lead a normal life again.

Kelly, 32, has been invited to be a patron of the Perthes Association - "a great honour" - and when he is not working on behalf of the charity he acts as a role model. "Perthes is a disease which is contained if they catch it early enough," he said, "It doesn't affect later life. I'm the perfect example for any

sufferer of that disease." No one could say he has not spread the message over most of the country. He began at Walsali and arrived at Prenton Park last summer for a £350,000 fee via West Ham, Leicester, Newcastle, Wolves and Sunderland, scoring nearly 200 goals in the process. Eleven of where Kelly has had the unen-

> replaceable, his player-manag-

Aldridge. It is not something new because Kelly has spent much of his international career with the Republic of Ireland being beld against a striker for whom the word prolific scarcely does him justice. Kelly scored a hattrick in his first match for his

played three Photograph: Allsport consecutive

matches partly Rovers. After the rancour of because Aldridge was around. "No one could fill Aldo's fourth round, Newcastle are shoes," he said. "Without doubt, he's a greatest scorer of our time. The records speak for themselves, he's got more goals than anybody and at the very highest level. If I'm compared to him, great.

"The biggest lesson he to win. Even at 39 he's desperate to score. He'll get a goal in training and his arms go up and he's leaping around. You're thinking 'what are you doing? but it's such a big thing for him. You learn from him all the time."

Tuesday's win over Swindon. ager Kenny Dalglish - elevated Tranmere out of the First Division's relegation places and . Kelly believes the team's passing style will suit the surface they'll encounter tomorrow. "We always try to play football," he said, "which is difficult on the. bog of a pitch we've got at Prenton Park. We're handicapped at home. As far as I'm concerned Such sang-froid probably it couldn't have been a better draw. I had some fantastic a football career to talk about times at Newcastle and I'll be at all, as he was just four years going back there as captain, old when he was diagnosed as leading the team out. It will be

Saturday 14 February 1998

Third Test: Paceman's treble strike rocks West Indies to save Atherton from first day struggle

Fraser rides to England's rescue

Derek Pringle reports from Port of Spain

West Indies 127-4 v England

MICHAEL ATHERTON is not by nature a gambler. If he was. England would surely have batted first on the second of the Queen's Park Oval pitches. Instead, the England captain followed the general consensus and put his opponents in to bat, a ploy that was heading towards disaster until Angus Fraser retrieved the situation with three quick wickets after lunch.

The England captain's followed an over later. Lara record is not a good one as far may have never scored a Test as inserting the opposition is concerned, and bowling first would have probably been against his better instincts. ominous. Having played quite But force of circumstance, as beautifully, he then aimed an well as sheer weight of opin- ambitious pull at Fraser. It ion around him, clearly persuaded him it was the right thing to do, although there was probably an element of not wanting the West Indies ground, and questioning bowlers to have first use of it whether or not the ball had

as well. Having begun badly, with again failing to find a consistent line and length, Atherton's England's fielders, Lara was decision was beginning to look as threadbare as the pitch. With Black Friday already having proved unlucky for Adam tain. Hollioake, who failed a fitness test on his sore back, England were following suit until Fras- mosity between the pair that er, operating from his favourite Pavilion End, took the important wickets of Bri- ago. Then the pair were inan Lara, Carl Hooper, and Sherwin Campbell.

Following Caddick's first post-lunch over, savaged for 19 runs by a combination of stunning Lara shots and help yourself half-volleys, Fraser of Campbell's bat. As he had done earlier with Stuart the catch low down at first slip.

At that stage, with the score 93 for 2. Atherton's decision to field first was looking discomplexion of a Test match has from granite and asking them soon as the 11th over, it was brought a smile of relief to

No. 3534. Saturday 14 February

Friday's solution

a habit of turning on its head when the key players are removed, which is what hapwhen England dismissed Hooper and Lara in the space of four overs.

Inevitably it was Fraser again, who this time was fortunate that Mark Butcher, playing instead of his injured Surrey team-mate Hollioake, was on the end of a one-handed catch at cover as Hooper, no doubt brimming with confidence after his Test-winning knock four days ago, drove at

But if that was reward enough, the jewel in the crown century on his home ground here in Port-of-Spain, but this time the portents were looking took the bottom edge on its way to Jack Russell, who took a tumbling catch.

With Lara standing his carried to Russell, the catch was referred to the third um-England's opening bowlers pire. After watching TV replay, and much to the jubilation of given out and for the third time in the series that Fraser had dismissed the West Indies cap-

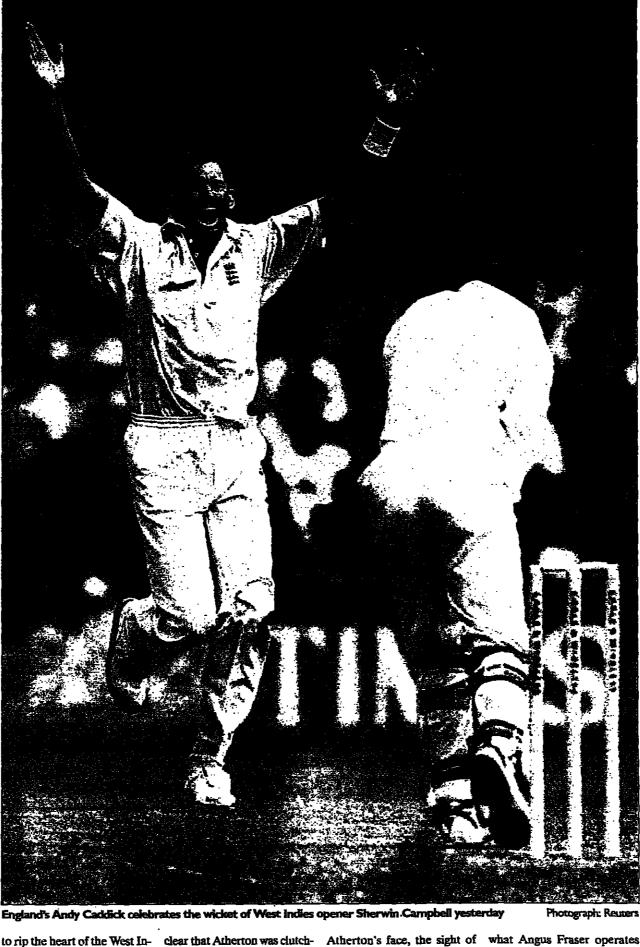
> Fraser brings out the worst in Lara and there is an anistems from the West Indies tour of England two years volved in a slanging match on the pitch during the final two to rip the heart of the West In-Tests, an episode that continued when Lara refused to shake the bowler's hand at the

At Test level, bowling first probing length found the edge is a fairly risky ploy when your many would have considered bowling attack are confident too far. and firing, let alone when they Williams, Thorpe neatly took are feeling their way back after having the finger of accusation pointed at them.

Neither Andy Caddick nor tinctly unwise. However, the pression that they are hewn With Phil Tufnell coming on as

Last Saturday's solution

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



England's Andy Caddick celebrates the wicket of West Indies opener Sherwin Campbell yesterday

dies batting out on a pitch that ing at straws and England Lara belting Caddick's first ball with, he appears to have a staris slower and with far less day chasing leather. grass than its predecessor upon which Atherton chose to bat - was a leap of faith that

The opening salvo, which was fairly innocuous bore this out, and neither Sherwin Campbell nor Stuart Williams, who is something of a techni-Dean Headley give the im- cal horror story, were troubled.

ACROSS

Sister's place is progressing? (6) Cut extra order, becom-

metal units collapsing 10 Leave city in temper (6)

12 Its constituents may turn out hard-hearted

(3,2,10)
13 European is engaged in state dispute (8)

14 Girl's packing trendy

16 Support from one in voice (5)

18 One driving to right's

will (15) 23 Party muddle with a

the floor (8)

brunkered in wet (8)

20 Not in the manner of a

missing piece of cake

24 Energy needed in shift-

25 Note the make for re-

pair (6). 26 Bird? Seal, from the

ing mullion: it's flat on

coat (5)

ing sickly (6)

were destined for a long hot

However, when Caddick switched to the Northern End. Williams' shortcomings in the technical department caught. up with him. He pushed loosely at the first ball of the tall bowler's second spell and edged a catch low down to the reliable Graham Thorpe at first slip.

If the breakthrough

1 It could be diagnosed

ner (5,7)

it's dope (7) Only half obdurate in

odd fish (12)

the rocks (9)

the end (4)
11 Characteristic of the

15 Brash, drinking five on

16 Smell beneath heel (7)

17 Homesteader left dog outside (7) 19 Dilapidated, according

trade etc (5) 22 Blossom turning up on

Southern plants (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of . Answers and winners' tannes will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Cronsword. P. O. Box solts, The Independent, I Canada Square, Canary Winnt, London E14 SBL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners S Moroz, Norwich; D McCrisick, Weymouth: R Fell, Merseyside; E Precious, Holmbridge, A Donovan, Haywards Heath.

to the survey (3-4) River Test's abandoned

as scurvy (9)
The Parisian's following

suggestion for a flutter

Right good human I'd found inclegant in man-

Correspond, in a flap Boy's final report (5) Sediment might prove to him back past the bowler for four, would have brought the furrowed brow - a constant ents on the line.

feature of the first hour -

back with a vengeance. With a puzzle like Caddick that Atherton hasn't deep lines etched all over his youthful countenance. As a bowler with height, pace and outswing, Caddick has it all. And yet, despite this skill and firepower,

S Chanderpaul not out

tlingly delicate disposition when called upon to put his tal-

At this level of cricket, confidence is everything and while Caddick appears to unable to to contend with, it is a wonder retain the stuff, Fraser, from his 11 wickets on the neighbouring pitch, was fortunately still oozing it, albeit in that careworn way of his as West Indies went about repairing the early damage he had caused.

which potentially far outweighs More reports, page 22 QUEEN'S PARK OVAL SCOREBOARD First day; England won toss WEST (NDIES - First Innings S L Campbell c Thorpe b Fraser ... S C Williams c Thorpe b Caddick *B C Lara c Russell b Fraser C L Hooper c Butcher b Fraser

JC Adams not out 18
Extras (nb3) 10
Total (for 4, 55 overs) 127
Pall: 1-94, 55 overs) 127
Pall: 1-95, 2-93, 3-95, 4-100.
To bat: †D Williams, C E L Ambross, N A M McLean, K C G Benjamin, C A ENGLAND: *M A Atherton, A J Stewart, G P Thorpe, N Hussain, J P Craw-ley, M A Butcher, †R C Russell, A R Caddick D W Headley, A R C Fraser, P C R Tufnell

ON MONDAY A night at the

Umpires: E Nicholis (WI) and D B Hair (Aus).

Sheikh Mohammed: the most powerful

TODAY

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Dubai races with

figure in British racing talks to John Roberts



Thirteen pages of sport begin on page 16

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Chelsea claim Gullit wanted £3.3m a year

Football

RUUD GULLIT yesterday denied that money was at the root of his departure from Chelsea and insisted "They are using that as a stick to hit me with. I want to know the real reason." However, Gullit's version

of his sacking was promptly questioned by Colin Hutchinson the club's managing director, who described Gullit as being "crafty" by saying he wanted £2m a year to stay, and that what he actually wanted was £3.3m a year. Hutchinson added that had Gullit been prepared to negotiate a new contract earlier he would still be their manager.

Another dramatic day for the club began with a packed press conference in west London in which Guilit gave his version of recent events. He claimed Chelsea had refused to negotiate over his proposed new contract but had instead conducted transfer dealings behind his back with the apparent connivance of senior players including his replacement, Gianluca Vialli.

Gullit admitted that he had asked for a salary of £2m a year, just as he had when approached to join the club as a player, but had expected to agree a lesser figure after negotiation as had happened in 1995.

However, a few hours later Hutchinson took issue with some of Gullit's claims. "He has said in the press conference today, and he said to me yesterday, 'You didn't make an offer.' I disagree g, just before it was aborted.

"I said to him, Well Rund, if you misunderstood, the figure was £1m per year gross. Would you have accepted that?' And he flatly said no. Rund, who is a master of the media, very craftily said today that he asked for £2m. He did ask for £2m and I immediately responded and said, 'Gross?' And he said, 'No, netto. I always talk netto.'

"£2m netto is a far bigger commitment to the club than

52m gross. For Rund to receive f2m a year in his hand means that the club has got to pay tax on at As far as we're concerned he was asking for £3,220,000 per year. But it gets worse than that because the club has to pay camings related contributions on that. With his basic salary, and the rest, we were looking at a commitment of £3,365,000 a year to keep Rund and quite horestly we couldn't afford it.

"I explained to him that the gap was too wide for further meaningful negotiations and said that because of the timescale we would have to start looking at alternatives."

Gullit admitted that when Hutchinson said last week that the club would look for a new manager he thought they were "bluffing".

After Vialli's appointment was announced on Thursday Gullit sought a meeting with the club chairman, Ken Bates. which was granted at 6.30pm, three hours later. After 20 minutes discussion during which Bates, said Gullit, passed responsibility to Hutchinson who had himself passed the buck to "the board" Bates "handed me a letter saying I am sacked".

Gullit also said his relationship with Bates was restricted to match days, and that he had discovered his fate from Teletext.

Instead he was told, on Thursday, that the board had decided to find another manager. Within hours he discovered that was Vialli who, he claimed, had met with Rangers' Brian Laudrup, a Chelsea transfer target, at a secret meeting on Wedneswith that and I repeated the of- day also, attended by Colin fer to him yesterday in our meet- Hutchinson, Chelsea's chief ex-Laudrup, he said, had been told

Gullit was too busy to attend. Gullit added that he "did not have a clue" what he was going to do next. He said he did not want to go anywhere solely as a player but would like to continue playing. This would ostensibly rule out both Italy's Serie A, where player-managers are banned, and the Dutch national job.

Cheisea in turmoil, page 26

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YOUR MONEY PERSONAL FINANCE Saturday 14 February 1998

Saturday 14 February 1998



Come home to a real fire: British insurers are paying £1 m a day for arson claims. The true cost, including interruption to work, can be twice as high; not to mention lives lost and serious injuries

Photograph: Ron Sanford/Tony Stone Images

Your plans may go up in smoke, too...

Whether it's kids torching a stolen car, jilted lovers out for revenge or simple insurance fraud, arson is a growing problem. By Paul Slade

Newcastle's West End - three-and- ter box and ignited at four o'clock in a-half square miles of terraced houses, back lanes and brickyards - is the arson capital of Europe. Eight out of flat for £1,500 in this area, so there's 10 fires put out by the local brigade a real incentive for landlords in neghave been started deliberately.

of the area's arson task force, says: "The UK has the highest rate of arson in Europe and the West End of Newcastle has the highest rate in the UK. There's a very high unemployment rate, a lot of run-down estates. and very few private houses."

The local fire brigade reports about 600 malicious fires in the area each year - about two a day. For them, arson accounts for 83 per cent of call-outs, against 50 per cent for the UK as a whole.

Detective Campbell says: "We've arrested drug gangs who've petrolbombed one another's property. we've had jilted boyfriends setting fire to the new boyfriend's car. We've had a mother with a young daughter who had petrol poured through their letthe morning.

"You can pick up a three-bedroom ative equity to set fire to the premis-Detective Martyn Campbell, part es for the insurance money. We've had a couple of those. But the majority are 10- to 16-year-olds getting into empty premises and setting fire

to them.

Newcastle's problems may be unique, but arson is a growing problem throughout the UK. Home Office figures record 90,500 malicious fires in 1996, a jump of 7 per cent on the previous year. This total includes 37,500 buildings deliberately set alight - about one in three of all the building fires reported - and 45,000 cars and other vehicles - just over half of all road vehicle fires. In 1996, 136 people died as a result of arson and another 3,284 were seriously injured.

arson claims at the rate of £1m a day.

Insurers do not add a sum to your premiums specifically to cover arson, but lump the risk in with all other damage, which means you pay for other people's crimes.

Tony Baker of the industry's Arson Prevention Bureau says the best thing worried policyholders can do to guard against the risk is improve the general security of their home. This means maintaining external fences, fitting approved door and window locks and considering security lighting outside. "Most people are really surprised when you tell them the extent of arson and the cost in lives and injuries," he says.

What can you do?

"But, once you are alerted to it, there are basic things you can do. Keep gaps under doors as narrow as possible to stop lighted paper being pushed under them. If you've got a letterbox, put a metal container on the inside to contain any fire from lighted rags or paper pushed through

Prevention Bureau, says that adding set the fire. All fires which cause damin the incidental costs involved, such as interruption to work, brings the total cost closer to twice that.

As far as insurers are concerned, British insurers currently pay out arson claims are treated like any other fire claims - unless they believe the a private forensic lab will be called

Tony Baker, of the industry's Arson owner of the house or car involved age worth more than a couple of thousand pounds will trigger a visit from a specialist loss adjuster, who will give

his view on how the fire started. If there are reasons for suspicion, in. About one in five arson fires turn out to have been set by the owner as an attempt at insurance fraud.

Often, the clue lies less in the fire damage itself than in what was lost. Cornhill deputy claims manager Harry Rule says: "If you look at the statistics of vehicles stolen, it's this year's and last year's that top the league. It tails off as you go back through six-, seven-, eight-year-old vehicles.

"And then you find that nine- and 10-year-old vehicles are stolen more often and invariably found burnt out. I'm afraid you do get the rather curious idea in your head that here is a policyholder whose car has reached the end of the road."

Joyriding is another common cause of car fires. Mr Baker says: "What does a bored 10- to 14-yearold do of an evening when they want to have bit of fun? They pinch a car, race it around, and set it on fire. There are people who like to watch fires, and setting fire to a vehicle is just fun to them.

often find that warehouse fires involve the loss of stock which is no longer fashionable, or cannot be sold for some other reason. This might mean, for example, a January fire which happens to dispose of a huge pile of last year's calendars.

On the commercial side, insurers

Domestic arson too, is often easy to detect. Neil Kelly of loss adjusters Crawford THG says: "You do get the professional touch, but you also get some fairly inept things. People get caught out when they want the fire to spread. They lay a trail of combustible material where they want the fire to run along. We open up the premises later and, lo and behold, it's still there."

The hope of a hefty insurance payout is not the driving force for all arsonists who set fire to their own homes. One 19-year-old man made such a mess of the DIY work on his flat that he persuaded a friend to help him set fire to the place so the council would rehouse him. In fact, the council rehoused both of them - behind bars.

Price Offer

Launch Offer Period

27 February

INSIDE

3/JOHN WINDSOR

Rock 'n' Roll swindle?

5/JONATHAN DAVES

Go easy on stocks

7/ANDREW

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OXBORROW Going for growth

In the July Budget, the Chancellor announced that tax exempt savings schemes will change in April 1999. As a result you may not be able to continue to enjoy the current tax benefits offered by a PEP. However, the Government has announced that a new tax privileged vehicle is to be introduced — the Individual Savings In the July Budget, the Chancellor announced that tax exempt savings schemes will change in April 1999. As a result you may not be able to continue to enjoy the current tax benefits will depend on your or circumstances. Fast performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The price of Account, or ISA for short. Full details have yet to be confirmed and we are currently in discussion with the Government of the future in Italy in the price of Account, or ISA for short. Full details have yet to be confirmed and we are currently in discussion with the Government of the future performance. The price of Account, or ISA for short. Full details have yet to be confirmed and we are currently in discussion with the Government of the future performance. The price of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up, you may not get back as much as you investment advice or make any recommendations regarding investments — we only promote the packaged products and services of the M&G marketing group.

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Space invasion



NIC **CICUTTI**

PERSONAL FINANCE JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

THIS column begins in a even the more complex ones. most unusual style - with an apology. The growing success (literally) of the Your Money section, in advertising uitable Life's pensions are terms, coupled with technical not, for example, as underproblems at our end, have meant that it has not been is no denying they are among possible to contain all our the most competitive. regular constituent parts in one part of the newspaper.

our motoring page in the they simply can't work out Time Off section of today's what companies are taking paper. Property is at the back out of their pensions in fees of the main section. At the and charges. So, yes, simplisame time, a temporary lack fication is necessary - and the of space means we have held over for one week the inter- sessment panel to award the net Investor column from kitemark also appeals. Robin Amlot. We have also John Andrew, our Stockmarket Made Simple writer, who pay £100 a month into although he resurfaces today a personal pension less than as our Valentine's Day columnist. See what you think.

desk this week was one from essary complication"? Virgin Direct. The company mirrors its boss. Richard Branson, in its endless quest spite their excellent value, the for publicity. But not all Virgin's attempts at headlinegrabbing are pointless stunts. meant their products were

This week's PR effort involves a proposal from Mr Branson, which he hopes will "kitemark" system for fi- workable. nancial products.

Included in Virgin's sights are the hopelessly complicat- The Independent on Sunday ed charging structures used by many companies on their products, including pensions. to Making Your Investments

It is also true that complexity need not necessarily mean poor value - I find Eqstandable as some, but there

Yet one of the common bugbears of many readers, as You will therefore find our postbag attests, is that idea of an independent as-

But I still have a problem. given a one-week break to What if a company decides that it will charge people those who pay in £50? What if the charging structures Apologies over, now to were tiered even further - as the meaty stuff. Among the some are? Would Mr many hundreds of letters "kitemark" Branson see this and faxes that crossed my as "good value" or "unnec-

> And would some companies be denied a kitemark if, denature of the market they address (self-invested pensions) more complex than normal?

The verdict on this Virgin stunt must be - not bad, be backed by a number of Richard. But you've still got other institutions, for a some way to go to make it

Finally, a plug. My colleague Steve Lodge, editor of personal finance section, has written an excellent "Guide This is a difficult area for Work for You". It is sponme. On the one hand, having sored by Wesleyan Financial sat in this chair for a year or ,. Services and is available by two, I can generally under- calling 0800 1379749. Or fill stand the way charges work. in the coupon on page 12.

As PEPs go out and ISAs come in, lain Morse looks at an alternative tax haven for investors' cash

Nothing ventured...

YOU ARE likely to be hearing a lot more about Venture Capital Trusts (VCIs) over the next few months. VCTs are investment funds which take carry generous tax incentives.

small and risky ventures raise share subscription from priwere set up to invest into CGT exemption of £6,500, rentable property, including campus accommodation for gain of £90,000, on which the asstudents.

The regulation of VCTs reflects the lesson learned from the failure of BESs to help high risk, hi-tech enterprises find investment backing. The risk should not be under-estimated: as from June last year, VCIs cannot be "asset backed" or "protected". This makes any VCT investment risky.

In return, you can put as much as £100,000 in a year into one or more funds, and can benefit from four tax breaks, two on amount you invest.

All capital gains on VCT

(CGT) on shares just sold by reinvesting the gain into a VCI.

Moores Marr Bradley (MMB), a firm of independent financial advisers specialising in equity in companies worth helping accountants shelter £10m or less. Conceived as a their clients' money from tax, replacement to Business Ex- offers the following example of pansion Schemes (BES), they VCTs tax generosity. Suppose you are a high-rate taxpayer, BESs were intended to help selling shares which originally nall and risky ventures raise cost £100,000 for £206,500. Afmoney, not from banks but by ter deducting the original cost, plus an inderation allowance of, vate investors. Instead, most say, £10,000, and the annual

> £36,000. By investing the whole gain of £90,000 into a VCT, any capital gains liability is deferred

there would still be a chargeable

sumed liability would be

until the VCT is sold. Claiming the 20 per cent income-tax rebate, you have already made £18,000, adding this to your existing share portfolio. You have already sheltered £36,000 from the tax man and, in theory, you have turned £90,000 into £108,000.

The catch is that to qualify income and two on capital for two of these tax breaks - the gains. All dividend income from 20 per cent rebate and CGT roll VCT shares is tax free. If buy- over - you must hold the VCT ing into a new issue, you can shares for at least five years. claim back 20 per cent income This would not be much of a tax at the lower rate of the catch except for the inherently risky nature of VCT investment.

Gareth Marr, managing shares are also tax exempt, but director at MMB, says: "VCTs more than this, you can roll over may not be suitable for everyany liability for capital gains tax one. The job of any adviser is accounts on a monthly basis."



Risky ventures: instead BESs were set up to invest in property, including student digs

to look very carefully at the . By comparison to traditional client's needs to determine fund management, this is whether this investment fits. If it does not, you have to be prepared to advise against a VCT, no matter how attractive the tax incentive. If it does fit, you also have to be prepared to research the market extremely carefully to find the right VCT"

Martin Churchill, director of research at stockbroker Allenbridge, adds: "Comparing VCIs are thinking about investing to say PEPs is like putting together chalk and cheese. When you buy into a VCT you are lending your money to a team who may only be investing into 15 or 20 small companies, appointing and removing board members, seeing management

vestment into any one company than £1m, and the average running at £733,000. It also calls for particular skills on the part of those running the VCL

Allenbridge specialise in analysing VCT performance, and Mr Churchill warns: "If you into one, look closely at the management's track record on deal making. The key factors are that they be consistent, used to doing deals of the right size and frequency, and spread the exposure of investors' funds across both companies and

Because VCIs are intended to provide start-up capital, they hands-on stuff, with annual in- are not allowed to invest into shares which can be traded on by the VCT limited to not more main stock markets. The only exception to this are shares traded on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM), itself set up to provide a market for shares in small firms.

This means that VCT funds may have difficulty finding present, there are only some 12,000 VCT holders, by comparison with about 3.3 million Allenbridge is offering readers of PEP owners. Total funds under management have a value of £370m, with new issues this year looking to top this up by at least £150m. This is a lot of ject. Fax the company on 01908 new money to flow into a 690369 to receive a copy.

limited market, potentially foreing up the price of good deals, Past performance might serve as a guide, but for the fact

that most existing funds first issued shares in 1997. Although VCT share prices are quoted and tradable, there is no incentive to sell within the fiveyear term. For those still tempted,

Close Brothers is looking to raise £10m for a fund investing only into AIM-listed shares. The company already manages some £62.8m of VCT funds. Murray Johnstone also runs existing funds of around £55m. and are looking to raise a further £40m for a general VCL

Size isn't everything, but it implies diversification of risk. Murray Johnstone's existing VCT funds are invested across 12 industry sectors, with average exposure per sector of less than 10 per cent of total fund

This new generation of VCTs is packaged to look much like other retail financial products. Don't be deceived. These are not replacement PEPs, but investments of a riskier nature. buyers for shares they hold. At Invest only what you can afford

> The Independent' a free guide to VCTs. Call 0171-409 IIII. Moores Marr Bradley offers a short pamphlet on the same sub-

SPOTLIGHT ON: M&G'S INDEX-TRACKER PEP

The product: M&G's Index Tracker personal equity plan (PEP).

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Plus points: The FTSE All-Share has risen by 19 per cent over the past year, to the end of January. This is much

with "ISA-bility". This means it can fee. This is less, for example, than switch without penalty into another Virgin's tracker PEP. month and M&G's managers will use vehicle which will replace the PEP in Drawbacks and risks: This is an April 1999, the Individual Savings unusual departure for M&G, which has Account (ISA).

little. There is no initial charge, which has been troubled by poor perforelsewhere can come to 3 per cent of mance until very recently. better performance than most active the investment. There are also no exit It has farmed out the day-to-day fund managers. None of the money will fees, which punish investors for management to State Street Global go to paying "star" fund managers ex- needing their money sooner than they Advisors, which does manage over side if the market slumps. cessive fees to underperform the index. thought they would. There is only a \$140bn of tracker fund money.

If used within a PEP, the fund comes 0.75 per cent annual management

no experience of running tracker Taking up this investment will cost funds. But it's "value-driven" approach

Annual management charges could be cheaper. Legal & General charges just 0.5 per cent a year. Buy L&G's identical tracker through a discount broker and you could even end up being paid £60 to set one up.

But the main worry is the "Duke of York" objection to all trackers; when they're up, they're up, and when they're down, they're down. They have no way of mitigating the down-

financial adviser Bates & Partners, criticises M&G for promoting the product to first-time, "unsophisticated" investors. "It's all very well looking at how much a tracker can rise. But you will also get the full whack of any

Verdict: As long as there are cheaper trackers around, why bother with this one?

Marks out of five: Two and a half because unlike some other trackers.

> or more if you're a higher rate tampayer. . Of course there's a good deal more :-

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to these benefits by holding Investment Trust shares in a PEP. **ADVANTAGES**

at the mere mention of the word mallion, consider this: If you add up your lifetime earnings - past and Like most people looking for tax-efficient future - you will see that you will almost certainly earn a fortune in your lifetime. investments, you probably already know the benefits of PEPs. it could add up to a million pounds - or They appeal to investors because returns on both capital and The trouble is, like most people you'll earn it - and spend it. income are entirely tax-free. Of course, what you could be doing is taking this fortune and turning some of it But you may not know that you could add still further

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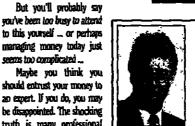
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GUIDE

ND IF YOUR MIND clamps shut IF YOU'D LIKE TO RETIRE WITH A MILLION -START TAKING YOUR OWN ADVICE. into another fortune - the one you want



an expert. If you do, you may be disappointed. The shocking truth is many professional fund managers are not much good at what they do. Most of them do more poorly than the Stockmarket as a whole. The only certainty about letting others manage your money is that you'll

to end up with

seems too complicated ...

let them bein themselves to a chunk of it through their fees. IN FACT the widely-accepted Random Walk theory says that you will beat the pros at picking shares by simply blindfolding yourself and sticking a pin in the share table in your newspaper. incredible, but true.

Look at unit trusts. The vast majority of them underperform the Stockmarket in general over time. They would have actually lost you money compared to buving shares at random! So the question is: Why pay fat

commissions and "management fees" to have a so-called professional manage you What about seeking advice from a financial advisor - someone who'll give

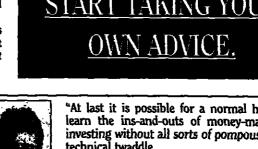
you sound and importial advice on what best to do with your hard-earned money. Well, you're going to have to look quite hard. Firstly, most financial advisors aren't

intependent. They're not even allowed to call themselves that. That's because they're employed by the big financial fund managers to sell their products, and their products alone. They're really just So what about those who are allowed to call themselves independent financial

advisers? Consider this fact: most IFA's earn their living from commission from the products they sell. Yet some of the best investments are run by firms which pay no commission. How likely do you think it is they'll be on your IFA's shortlist of recommended investments if there's a commission-paying firm offering a remotely similar product?

But ... let's face it ... most people find today's world of personal finances too

كأذا عن ألاطاء



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IRS is like a great breath of fresh air.

Douglas Moffitt, TV and Radio Financial Commentator

complicated - and too balling. In short, they're stuck. They are successful in many other respects. But when it comes to investing and money management know you had. they have no real plan. All because there's been no simple way to get started. That is,

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crafty but simple "behind-the-scenes" techniques that you don't usually get to find out about at all. The kind that can often boost your returns 20, 30, even 50 per cent more - sometimes just in months - not years. FOR EXAMPLE, a little technique called

"straddle", lets you het that the Stockmarket will go up - and at the same time bet that it will go down - believe it or not, it is perfectly possible to make a profit whether it goes up or goes down! Or how you can use your pension plan to turn £770 into £1000 overnight .

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does help. SPI shows you how to start on the way towards having that million - and being able to tell yourself that you're a "millionaire". So, before your mind clamps shut over that word again ... why not at least take the opportunity to see for yourself? You can now get to look over the first two lessons with no obligation for 10 you'll learn in detail about a number of days just by posting the coupon below. And whatever you decide, Lesson 1 is yours to keep - FREE!

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COLLECT TO INVEST: JOHN WINDSOR

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Never mind the critics, this is art

Until recently, due to the cultivated brainlessness of Messrs Rotten, Vicious et al, Seventies punk was dismissed as a perverted style movement that sprang from rotten pop music. Today, art historians are beginning to appreciate the cunning of its visual imagery and to understand its roots in the Situationist art of the Sixties.

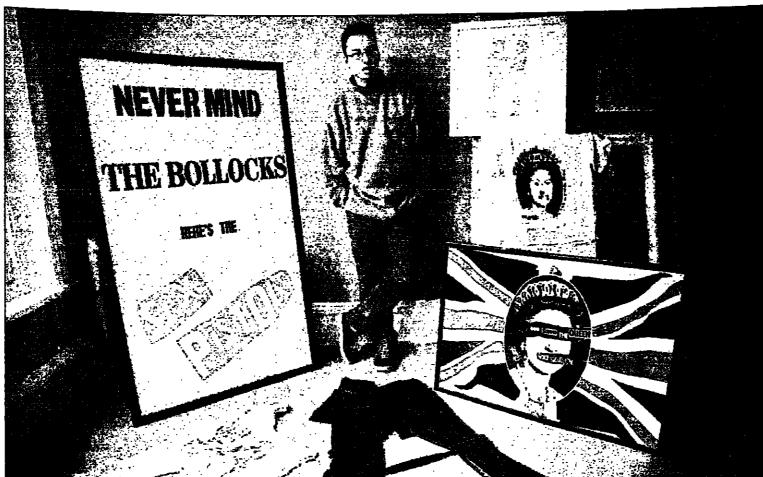
The first exhibition of "punk art", "I Groaned With Pain", was at the Eagle Gallery in Farringdon, east London in December 1995. It framed as fine art Sex Pistols posters and T-shirts showing bare breasts and homosexual cowboys exposing themselves. Now, an exhibition "Destroy: Punk Graphic Design in Britain" (mainly record sleeves) is at the Royal Festival Hall until 16 March. And Jamie Reid, the artist responsible for the Pistols' cutand-paste poster graphics, has had a retrospective in New York that will tour Japan and Australia before showing in London later this year.

In the salerooms, a steady market in Sex Pistols ephemera has developed. Prices would take off if only auctioneers would take the trouble to verify authenticity. Meanwhile, under £500 will buy a Sex Pistols poster or a T-shirt

The Pistols' spitting and vomiting and the DIY tackiness of their graphics had an apparent spontaneity. But that was deceptive. In fact, the entire punk media-package was meticulously contrived by the Pistols' Svengali-like controllers, the impresario Malcolm McLaren and fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, who had an avantgarde fashion shop on the King's

Their role as promoters is well known. The roots of punk in art less so. McLaren, who attended Croydon College of Art and Goldsmiths College, insists: "It was always an art thing. We were dealing in images". He and Westwood concocted a cocktail of pornographic, fetishistic and anti-Royal images calculated to stir up trouble during the Queen's Silver Jubilee

In the late Sixties, McLaren and Reid had been contemporaries at Croydon College of Art. They sat late into the night discussing the Paris Situationists' critique of loneliness and aimlessness as the bogies that have superceded the struggle for material survival, as well as their use of street theatre to criticise consumer society. Reid designed Christopher Gray's



Punk art: Paul Stolper, a London dealer in contemporary art, has one of the finest collections

Photograph: Philip Meech

book Leaving the 20th Century, an anthology of Situationist writing that became McLaren's bible. Punk nihilism is essentially Situationist. So is taking art out of the galleries and onto the streets. Later, McLaren bead-hunted Reid to design posters with cut-out typography - punk's hallmark.

The various, apparently disparate, images of punk graphics seem more coherent when viewed in a Situationist context. The bondage fetishism is not only sexual but social. What a deeper understanding of punk means in art market terms is that it confers upon it the gravitas of an art-historical movement. Once the art-buying intelligentsia realises that a full appreciation of it can be gained not just from back numbers of The Sun, but from scholarly essays such as George Robertson's "The Situationist International: Its Penetration Into British Culture (Block, issue 14, 1988, pp 38-53), they groups campaigning for the rights of will begin to reach for their wallets.

The forthcoming retrospective exhibition of Jamie Reid, now 51, records "As a printer, you develop a sixth sense" 30 years of his life as an artist, including videos and photographs. He has issued a signed limited-edition silk-screen version of his Pistols artwork. Good publicity for the originals.

I tracked him down to The Strongroom recording studios in Curtain Road, east London, where he is resident artist and working with a group of musicians called the Afro-Celt Sound System. He has embraced Druidism and Celtic culture.

How does he look back on his Never Mind the Bollocks posters? "I still think they are very valid and powerful images". When McLaren recruited him he was a printer-designer at the anarchist Suburban Press in south London, where he was already using ransom-note lettering ("we couldn't afford Letraset") on cheap pamphlets for

"As a printer, you develop a sixth sense that certain things will look good. Ripped-out lettering, for example, looks very graphic and direct".

And when the first wave of punk was over? "Bollocks to the Poll Tax" T-shirts. They were his. He also supplied graphics for the campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill - and the campaign to legalise cannabis. So start collecting.

The finest collection of punk gear, predominantly the Sex Pistols', has been accumulated over 10 years by Paul Stolper, a London dealer in contemporary art, and Andrew Wilson, assistant editor of Art Monthly. It was their collection that was shown at the Eagle Gallery. Wilson's critique of the origins of punk in the catalogue - itself a collector's piece - is an art-historical milestone.

punk items for nostalgia - I wouldn't women, ethnic minorities, squatters give a fig for Johnny Rotten's signa- of chaos.

ture". Wilson says: "We go for the visual image. That's what counts, rather than the music. Reid's "God Save the Queen" poster looks simple but it is a tour de force of printing. He used pink and yellow, colours that don't sit together and that are fugitive - they

Only they and a handful of collectors who worked at Westwood's shop know how to recognise genuine McLaren/Westwood garments by their labels. At a Bonhams auction of rock, pop and guitars last May, seven lots of punk T-shirts and bondage gear failed to sell because aficionados doubted their authenticity. A published guide to labels would send prices rocketing. But those in the know are keeping mum. Never mind; at the same sale, Pistols posters were selling for between £80 for "Never Mind the Bollocks" to Stolper, 32, says: "We don't collect £180 for "God Save the Queen". Buy now. It's your turn to make cash out

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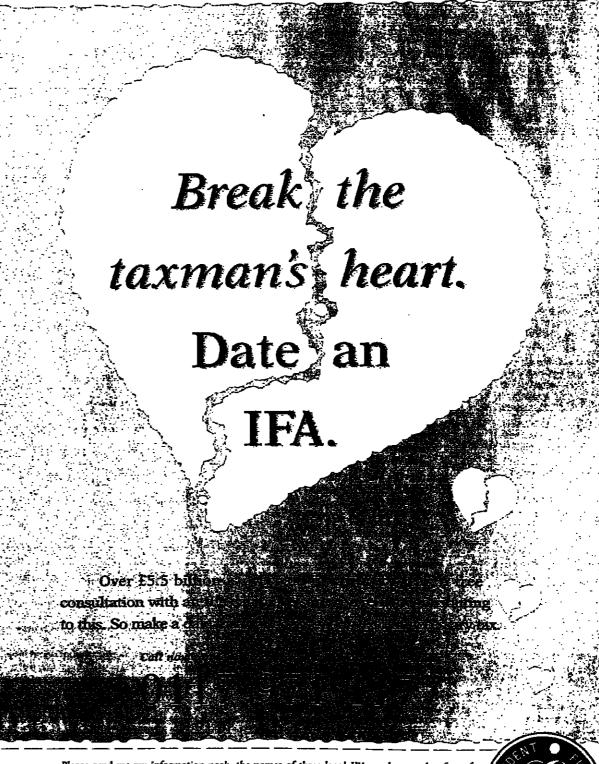
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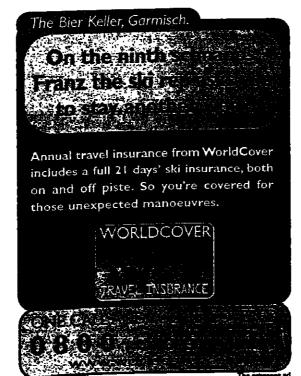
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BRIAN TORA

Follow Buffett into bonds

Not just here - but in Amerder what all the panic was about when Asia was falling about our ears last year.

Of course, the recovery we have seen in both currencies and stock markets on the other side of the world has helped our market, but bonds are so popular. in Asia it would be wise not to be suckered into believing this to be anything other than a dead tiger bounce. seem to be taking the view that the knock-on effect will not be great.

Investment perceptions are being coloured by the trend to lower inflation on both sides of the Atlantic. The likely slowdown in world growth and the availability of cheap manufactured goods should ensure that both the US Consumer Price Index and the RPI remain subdued.

England's Monetary Policy under par. Equally, it looks Committee is less sanguine. In its inflation report this week, it became clear that some members still believe inflation can rise again to haunt us. Indeed, with wage settlements still trending upwards and unemployment now at its lowest level for 18 years, they may have a point. The result in London markets has been to push the pound up yet again in the belief that we may not have buying shares on multiples seen the peak of the interest-rate cycle.

Treasuries has continued at strength of sterling. a higher level. It is worth rezero-coupon bonds last sum- strategy committee.

What a week! New high mer. Given the way this marground for the stock market. ket has moved, he has almost certainly made significantly ica, too. It makes you won- more out of bonds than he would have done in shares.

Forecasts for American inflation during the current year bave been coming down. Indeed, deflation is being talked about much more widely. No wonder

The market is saying that, at the very least, inflation is not returning, even if the Monetary Policy Committee But here and in America we is undecided. But with that arch enemy of a rising RPI, Governor Eddie George, siding with those who felt an interest-rate rise was unnecessary, I am increasingly coming around to the view that we should be learning to live without inflation.

This suggests that it is not too late to buy British Government Stocks. Their yields have already come down significantly and it is increasingly difficult to find at-Even so, the Bank of tractive stocks standing as though demand for Gilts ~ much of it from the pensions industry - is unlikely to

For those who feel the market has reached heady heights, justifying a little caution, it is not too late to follow Warren Buffett into bonds and lock away yields that might be unattainable a few months hence. It certainly seems a safer bet than of more than 20 times earnings at a time when profits In the US, demand for are being taken apart by the

flecting that Warren Buffet The writer is chairman of the put a reputed \$2bn into Greig Middleson investment

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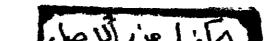
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The currency of love

On St Valentine's Day, John Andrew takes a either love or money that makes the world spin on its axis. Similarly, break from his regular economist are unanimous that a currency's velocity of circulation bent coins. It is unlikely they believed stock market column in coins. this section to look at the currency and motion, it is interestvalue of old tokens of affection.

about the force of money. Take Liza Minnelli's tongue-in-cheek hit song from the film Cabaret, Money makes the world go round. Gilbert and Sullivan had a different view in Iolanthe, claiming that it really is love that obsession with crooked or bent makes the world go round. Spendthrifts occasionally attempt to justify their expenditure by remarking:

Scientists dismiss claims that it is either love or money that makes the dropped by a courting couple, for it from a silver mine in Peru to its reinhas nothing to do with the shape of

ing to explore if there is any connection between coins and love. Old records reveal that there is indeed such an association.

According to Addy's Folk Tales THERE are some strange notions Derbyshire girls on All-Hallows Day placed a sprig of rosemary and a crooked sixpence under their pillows so that they might dream of their future husbands.

coins. Take the crooked man who walked a crooked mile and eventually found a crooked sixpence. Why "Coins are round so they go round". had the coin been vandalised?

that a crooked coin assumed amuletic properties, but by bending Having rejected any link between it the "love token" could easily be identified and therefore not accidentally spent.

The earliest mention of a "coilection" of coins in Britain refers to bent or "bowed" pieces. The 1512 Will of Sir Edward Howard reads: "I bequeath him my rope of bowed nobles - containing 300 angels". Nobles or angels were gold coins which circulated for a third of a pound. Although we know nothing of Sir Edward's exploits, it is safe to conclude that he was not a coin

collector. One of the quaintest references to coms and love is found in the Tatler for 11 November 1710. An essay entitled The Adventures of a Shilling

carnation as a Queen Anne shilling. It then follows its life as a coin of the

At one point the animated shilling tells of a Recruiting Sergeant, who "sacrificed me to his pleasures and made use of me to seduce a milkmaid. The wench bent me and gave me to her sweetheart applying more properly than she intended the usual form of, 'To my love and from my

With the mechanisation of the coining process, thicker coins were produced and bending money for

love tokens was no longer practical. Thousands of bent old coins have survived the years, forgotten memories of previous loves. Aithough interesting, collectors seek coins which have not been bent and such love tokens are of no commercial value.

However, there is a demand for is a flat disc, previously an 18th cen-



لمكذا من ألاصل

followed the bending craze. Worn coins of the period 1760-1800, were frequently engraved with names, monograms and typical symbolism

Most of those which have survived are the work of early 19th century hands. For example, there

of love such as a knot or Cupid's

the monetary love tokens that tury copper coins, which is inscribed on the obverse, "Peter Hart aged 23, Transported for seven years, August 1833", while the reverse bears these heart- for £65 or more.

breaking lines: When this you see Remember me And bear me in your mind Let all the world say what they will Don't prove to me unkind" Daniel Fearon of Bonhams Com

Department advises that an average 18th century copper coin engraved with a love theme is worth about £25, while outstanding examples will sell

However, any specimen with a love and transportation theme could be worth up to £1,000 as these are keenly sought in Australia. The more heart rending the verse, the higher the price.

Don't go overboard on equities



THE **JONATHAN**

DAVIS COLUMN

It is a brave man who is prepared to stick his head above the parapet and try to predict the future course of market returns. For anyone trying to do some serious long-term investment planning. however, the exercise must be undertaken. The most important criterion to adopt is to make sure that the assumptions you make

are: (i) consistent with each other; and (ii) based on realism. I make no excuse, therefore, for returning to the Barclays Capital gilt-equity study mentioned last week. As with equities generally, which reward those who take the risk of owning them with the author of the Barclays study, its markets and strategy expert Michael Hughes, is well paid for sticking his neck out and predicting how the next 10 years

might turn out. So I make no apology for putting Michael's neck on the block again in public. A year ago he correctly made the point that while the stock market looked overvalued on all conventional valuation models, that in itself was no reason to believe that it would not continue to do well at least for a time.

in some quarters for his bullish view, partly on the grounds that as he worked for a broking firm (BZW), he would be builish about equities, wouldn't he? Fair enough, I suppose, but as we now know, it turned out to be an excellent call, with 1997 another starring year for both shares

Past dividend yield & future forecasts

Ten years beginning	Dividend Yield*	Real Dividend growth rate	Infiation	Capital Appreciation of Equities	Total Equity Return	Risk premium	Total Bood Return
Dec.27	4.9	2.6	-0.5	2.6	7.6	0.9	6.7
Dec.37	4.6	1.4	2.8	2.1	6.8	2.7	4.1
Dec.47	4.3	1.0	4.8	1.9	7.2	8.9	-1.7
Dec.57	6.3	3.7	2.8	9.5	14.7	11.1	3.6
Dec.67	4.2	-29	11.5	5.6	11.2	3.2	8.0
Dec.77	5.4	4.2	8.0	14.9	20.8	7.9	12.9
Dec.87	4.4	3.0	4.5	10.8	15.6	3.9	11.7

Planning for	ecasts 1998-2	2007		*(%) for	dividend yields at b	eginning of period
Dividead Real inflation Yield (%) Dividead (end 97) Growth		Inflation	Capital Appreciation of Equities	Total Equity Return	Risk presolem	Total Bond Return
3.3	2.5	2.5	7.0	10.5	2.0	8.5
All % p.a (other)	than dividend vieto					

(including dividends) of 10.5 per

and gilts. This year, with Barclays having sold BZW, at least the actalking the book of his equity salesmen is one that can no

longer be reasonably held against Yet, as I indicated last week, he is still in fundamentally optimistic vein. He believes, as do I, that gilts will continue to become relatively more attractive as an investment class: their rerating vis-à-vis equities will continue. He sees yields on gilts reverting to something closer to their level before the great inflation horrors of the 1970s (5per centi, and the yield ratio (the yield on gilts as a multiple of the yield on shares) falling

total return of 8.5 per cent a year over the next 10 years - less in nominal terms than the last two decades, but a still handsome 6.0 per cent a year in real terms. This is a powerful argument for inchaling a higher proportion of gilts in any investor's portfolio today than would have been sensible in the past 20 years. As the table shows, it is the assumptions about At the time, he was criticised equity returns which look more suspect. The dividend yield on the market at the start of this year (3.3 per cent) is lower than at the start of all the previous 10-year periods covered by the table.

2.0) to 1.5 or less.

History suggests that a dividend yield in this range is likely to be followed by a period of negative real returns over five years

and only a marginally positive real return over the next 10 cusation that Michael might be years. Yet the Bardays Capital study suggests that equities are capable of continuing to appreciate in value by 7.0 per cent a year and generate a total return

That certainly looks ambitious and requires special circumstances to justify it. One obvious the mid 1980s. In real terms, if you project inflation of 2.5 per 10.5 per cent a year equity returns lash against large company profare not out of time with past exfrom its current level (around per annum (7.0 per cent minus 2.5 per cent) - which is actually He projects gilts producing a fractionally lower than the postwar average of 4.6 per cent per annum. Another underlying assumption you need to arrive at such an outcome is that companies will continue to be able to generate and retain the much higher proportion of GDP that they have achieved so far this

> Michael Hughes admits that this may be optimistic, but argues that it is not impossible in the current environment of low inflation and increasing globalisation. He also has some interesting statistics about the age profile of the country. As we all know from the "pensions timebomb", the proportion of the population aged over 55 is set to reach a record level in the next 15 years. If past

precedent is any guide, this should result in a fundamental shift in the growth of savings, which in turn could provide a fundamental shift in the valuation of both gilts and equities.

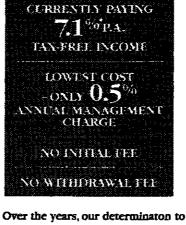
Put all these forces together, and what you have, conceivably, is a set of circumstances which could justify a continued period of good performance from shares, alongside a relative return one is the secular decline in in-flation that we have seen since are a lots of its and buts - war, inflation, deflation are all threats. So too is the possibility that cent a year, as Bardays does, then there will come a political back-HOM perience. It equates to real cap- governments. Michael Hughes' ital appreciation of 4.5 per cent point is that within the constraints of the long run historical averages, valuation parameters can and do change for quite long periods of time. We need to be alive, he ar-

> gues, to the possibility that the era we are facing is a genuinely unprecedented one, in which the savings rate soars, corporate profits remain strong and inflation is restrained for another decade. Too good to be true? One of the defining characteristics of the top of a bull market, goes an old saying, is its ability to "draw in higher intellects". My view remains that it is more prucome and hope to be pleasantly surprised rather than aim too high and be brought crashing down. The message is: stay invested in equities, but don't go

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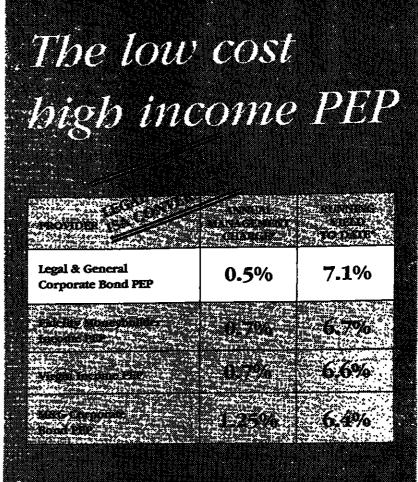
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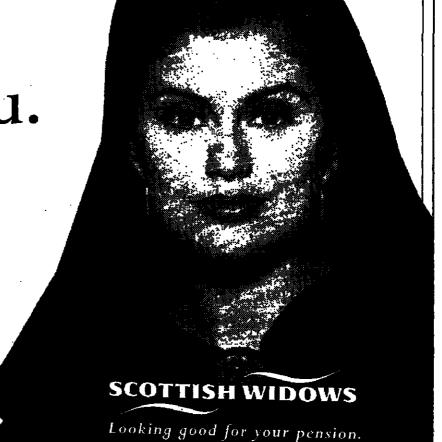
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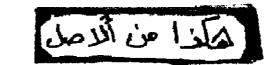
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Over the past week, strange things have been happening in the mortgage market - and some borrowers have seen a huge cut in prices as a result. Andrew Verity reports on the death of the MIG

Lenders cut their premiums

NEW MORTGAGES with some providers will now amount to 1 per cent less than the week before - without any change in interest rates. How did this happen?

It began with an an-nouncement from Halifax that it was abolishing charges for mortgage indemnity insurance for loans worth up to 90 per cent of the value of the house. This week, Woolwich and NatWest Mortgage Services joined in, abolishing mortgage indemnity charges for loans up to 90 per cent, while Northern Rock did so for loans up to 85

Charges for mortgage indemnity insurance (or gnarantees, also known as MIGs) are not trivial. For a 90 per cent loan on a house worth £100,000 borrowers with Halifax paid £1,020 to indemnify the mort-

The interest on this premium rolls up as long as the customer hangs on to the loan, which means a borrower with a 25-year loan would pay £8.50 a month at current interest rates. Over the life of the loan, this would amount to £2,550.

To its critics, Halifax's move was a belated response to a long-running scandal in the housing market, known to some as the "mortgage protection racket". The nub of the criticism is: who exactly is being indemnified, and against what? Does the customer truly realise what is being paid for?

Mortgage indemnity is almost exceptional in the insurance industry in that the customer is compelled on pain of not getting a mortgage to insure the lender against incurring a loss if he or she defaults. The premium, which is usually added to the mortgage, covers the risk that a slump in the housing market forces the lender to repossess and sell the house for less than the value of the loan.

Critics attack the practice on several fronts. The risk, they say, should be the company's, not the customer's. If the lender has to pass it on, it should build it Fifth, the premium is possibly into the rate it offers. Second, the most expensive single prethe lender typically takes a cut of the premium in commission market. A premium of £1,000 for "selling it" to the borrower. on a £100,000, 90 per cent When the premium is added to mortgage means that if the the loan, the lender is making house's value falls by £20,000. Interest on commission it has the premium has only covered itself earned, for persuading the a risk of losing £10,000. Hardly customer to protect not the customer but the lender.



Too little, too late? Some lenders have criticised the Halifax for acting on MIGs sooner

premiums rose sharply when the housing slump came in the early 1990s. But now that the housing slump has largely recovered, the premiums charged have barely come down. Moreover, lenders typically use just one insurer and do not shop

Fourth, a premium which was charged to indemnify the lender for the life of the loan up to 25 years - can go to waste if someone moves or remortgages. Another premium becomes payable on a new loan. mium insurance policy on the value for money.

But what has made most Third, mortgage indemnity consumers angry is that they

work against the customer. The housing slump in the early 1990s meant lenders were not covered for the whole of their loss on defaulted mortgages, Insurers, concerned with their own underwriting margins, became stricter with claims. To claim successfully, lenders were forced to show they had tried their best to get the money back from the borrowers.

Departments were set up to trace borrowers, who, believing their MIG protected them against the slump, were suddenly landed, out of the blue, pounds. Thousands are still being pursued.

Did customers realise what they were buying? Chris French, charged for mortgage indem-1995, I worked for a long time

for other building societies. No

one ever told me that mortgage indemnity guarantees didn't cover the customer. All the people I've known in the industry, to a man, said they weren't aware of it either. We all believed it did cover the customer. The poor old customer pays out for something and doesn't get anything back."

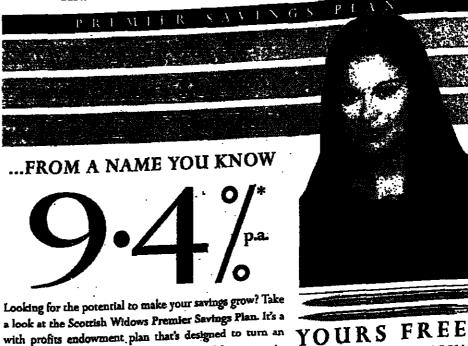
Cheltenham & Gloucester. together with other lenders including Mortgage Express, Direct Line, Coutts & Co, Hinkley & Rugby and Scottish Widows Bank, believe the scandal is such that Halifax's move, with bills for thousands of however honourable, is too

C&G has, since 1994, abolmanaging director of Kensing- per cent of the house value. This still carry a charge for mortgage ton Mortgages, which has never has saved 125,000 borrowers indemnity. First-time buyers nity, said: "Before we set up in Burden, C&G's managing carefully, all the more so if they Halifax over three years to cent of a home's value.

follow our lead - and the move is, in reality, an attempt to restore its market share. Furthermore, Halifax is only scrapping MIGs for lower risk customers and not across the

Halifax retorts that C&G offers few loans over 90 per cent of the house value, where the risk to the lender is much greater. Protection is a cost to the lender which will be passed on, in higher rates if not else-

Rising housing markets have helped the decision by Halifax, Woolwich and Northern Rock. It is now much less likely they ished mortgage indemnity for all a house. But it should be noted loans - not just those under 90 that most loans over 90 per cent over £400 each, or £50m. Roger should read any small-print director, said: "It has taken are borrowing more than 90 per



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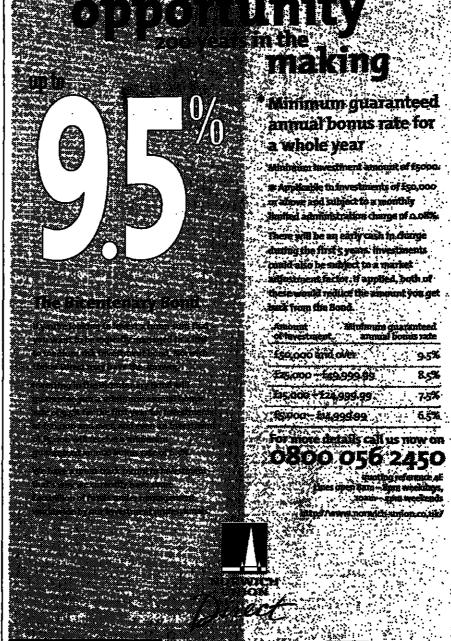
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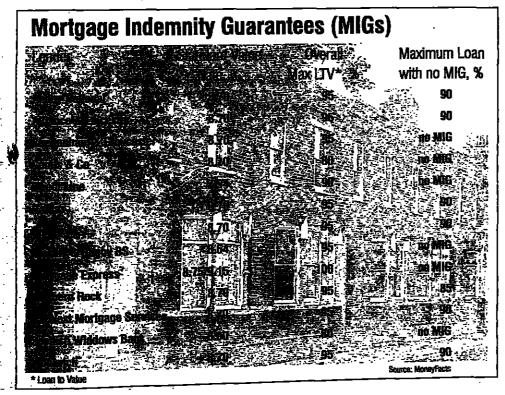
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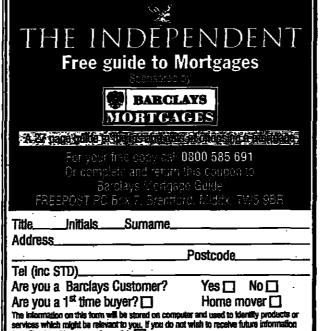
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THE CITI NEVER SLEEPS

Wrap up your investments

You have two tax years left before the arrival of ISAs in which you can invest in a PEP. David Prosser looks at

some of the top funds

DECIDING TO take advantage of personal equity plans (PEPs) is one thing. Actually finding the best ones is another matter altogether. There's a bewildering array of plans on offer and, in the run up to the end of the tax year in April, dozens of PEP managers will launch noisy advertising campaigns in an effort to persuade you to part with your cash.

To separate the wheat from the chaff, you need to be sure that you know what you're doing. Remember, thing else when it comes to making in itself a PEP is not an investment, a decision on which fund to choose it's merely a wrapper which you can are charges and performance, with put round other investments in order to avoid paying tax on the income and capital gains they produce.

To compare all managed PEPs in one exercise would be confusing. necessarily a guide to the future. But

of assets. And some types of PEP are study past performance. The key is ten prevent a manager from doing come (both UK equity income). need to decide which sectors of the market most interest you.

Among investment trusts, you have a choice of five main sectors: UK capital growth, UK income growth, UK general, UK smaller companies and continental Europe - plus a handful of more specialist overseas ones, into which a maximum of £1.500 ay be invested as part of a PEP.

There are six main unit trust sectors that will interest investors looking to hold their full £6,000 PEP allowance in a fund which buys UK or European equities. Most index tracking unit trusts are in the UK growth and income sector.

The benefit of dividing unit and investment trusts into sectors is that you can compare like with like when it comes to choosing a fund.

Two factors which are above anythe latter being the most crucial.

All financial advisers and investment professionals warn investors that past performance is not

particularly in the shorter term. So you agers can point to at least one period when they did particularly well, however short, and they'll obviously do this in their advertising material. What you should be looking for is consistently good, long-term performance figures, five years or more.

In addition, Jonathan Fry, of Guildford-based adviser and investment manager Premier Fund Managers, says: "Rather than simply looking at a snapshot of five-year performance, we like to look for funds which have produced top quartile performance over the past one, three and five years".

Equally though, when you have identified funds with the top past performance records, don't presume that the run of success will inevitably continue. Among the tests you should carry out, enquire whether the fund manager responsible for past successes is still with the company. Many top performers rely on the stock picking abilities of individual managers rather than employing a

team investment approach. Also, watch out for funds that have got significantly larger in a short space of time. A sudden influx of Different funds invest in different types that does not mean that you shouldn't large amounts of new money can of-

more risky than others for investors, to know what to look for. Most man- as well as he has previously. It can take time to research and invest in good quality stocks and shares.

> Clearly, charges are important. Every penniy you pay in fees to a PEP manager is a penny not being invested on your behalf, as we explain elsewhere. If you're asked to pay an initial charge of more than 5 per cent of your investment, or an annual charge of over 1.5 per cent, ask the provider why.

> Charges are particularly important with index-tracking funds. Here performance isn't an issue as long as the manager gets tracking right. The fund moves up and down in line with the market index which it is designed to follow.

The good news is that most of the index trackers have very low charges. The cheapest, the trackers run by Legal & General, Dresdner, M&G, Fidelity and River & Mercantile, all levy no initial fee and an anoual charge of less than 1 per cent.

There are certain funds that do stand out. In the unit trust market these include Newton Foundation, Perpetual Income, Schroder UK Equity (all in the UK growth and income unit trust sector), Schroder UK Enterprise (UK equity growth), GT Income, Morgan Grenfell Equity In-

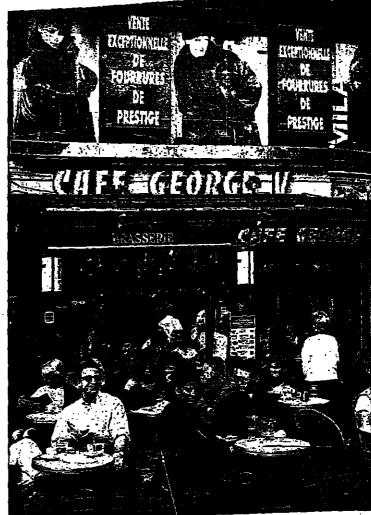
Gartmore UK Smaller Companies (UK smaller companies) and Jupiter

European (Europe).

Good performing investment trust PEPs include Fleming Claverbouse (UK general), Fleming Enterprise, Schroder UK Growth (UK capital growth), Henderson's TR European Growth, Gartmore European Growth (Europe) and Gartmore Smaller Companies (smaller companies).

Picking investment trusts, however, is a little more complicated than finding the best unit trusts. Investment trusts' share prices often trade at a discount to the value of the investments they hold, that is they are below net asset value, making this is an additional factor to consider when picking funds.

Dresdner: 0171-956 6600, Fidelity: 01732 361144, Fleming: 0171-382 8989, Gartmore: 0171-782 2000, GT: 0171-710 4567, Henderson: 0171-410 4100, Jupiter: 0171-314 4900, Legal & General: 0171-528 6200, M&G: 0171-626 4588, Morgan Grenfell: 0171-256 7500, Newton: 0171-332 9000, Perpetual: 01491 417000, River & Mercantile: 0171-405 7722, Schroder:



David Prosser is features editor of Foreign potential: you can invest in European trusts, too

Should you PEP up your portfolio before ISAs arrive?

As the Individual Savings Account Iooms next year, Dido Sandler considers whether PEPs are still worth investing in for another 12 months

WHILE BOTH PEPs and Tes- succession to the two current vestors will be able to transfer switched into the ISA if the Most of the leading managesas, a tax-free deposit account, schemes. shelter your funds from income tax, PEPs also protect insoon be launching the Individual Savings Account (ISA)

From April 1999, the ISA will allow £5,000 of investvestments from capital gains ments a year per individual, tax (CGT). But the Govern- £1,000 of which may be made ment wants to attract an up of savings deposits and a furadditional raft of new smaller ther £1,000 of life assurance. savers and investors and will Certain National Savings

accounts may also be included. as the new savings vehicle in go-ahead, existing PEP in-

preserve their exemption from tax, but with an upper limit of

Holders of Tessas will be able fully to fund their accounts and keep them through to the end of the five-year term, if the account is started If current proposals get the before April 1999. The capital from maturing Tessas may be

within the overall £50,000

The relatively low limit for PEP transfers has provoked uproar among the investment community. Clive Scott-Hopkins, director of independent financial advisers Towry Law Financial Services, accuses the Government of "unfair retrospective legislation".

Many blame the Treasury for punishing those who have been thrifty over the years, having the foresight to build up a sizeable tax-free nest egg. The Treasury believes 200,000 to 300,000 will be caught by the ISA cap on the as opposed to other investmaximum transfer. But Mr ments. Most investment trusts Royal & Sun Alliance, Scott-Hopkins says: "By the and a number of unit trusts have Gartmore, Perpetual and a April 1999 the number could be lower annual charges than those number of others, have anconsiderably higher if the stock imposed by PEP managers for nounced special discount offers market continues its upwards running their schemes. drive. The FTSE 100 has risen by some 12 per cent since the

beginning of the year." The Treasury has been subject to intense lobbying by financial trade associations and PEP providers to lift both the upper transfer limit and the lifetime cap of £50,000 on capital that any individual can put into ISAs. We will not know if the Government will take note of this until the Budget on 17 March, when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, is expected to confirm details of the ISA

Anyone with investments significantly below the £50,000 limit should probably go ahead and continue to use their annual PEP allowance, as they have littie to fear from the introduction of the ISA. Before parting with your money, you should, however, check with your PEP manager to see if they are planning to levy any charges for transfer

funds over to ISAs, and thus account's total capital remains ment groups such as Fidelity and M&G will make no charge

> "Individuals near or above the £50,000 level with their existing PEP portfolio may want to wait until after the Budget before deciding whether to use up their this year's allowance," says Mr Scott-Hopkins. "There will be a window of opportunity. between 18 March and 5 April, the end of the tax year, to pur-

chase a PEP if they wish." If the proposed limit does not change, he advises that lower-rate taxpayers may not find it so attractive to buy PEPs

But Paul Boni, investment director of independent financial advisers Berry Birch & Noble, says: "Whatever the outcome of the Chancellor's deliberations for individuals with sizeable PEP holdings, they should ensure they buy their 1997/98 quota. PEPs' capital gains tax-exemption may become more valuable, post-Budcheaper than the unit trusts that underlie them."

Many of the large PEP providers have initial charges of around 3 per cent, compared with 5 per cent if people invest straight into underlying unit trusts. If the worst comes to the worst, and Gordon Brown is in- Fidelity 0800 414171; Legal & transigent on the £50,000 would be to keep income stocks within the ISA, with any growth

stocks outside the account. This would be sensible because 99 per cent of the popu- Dido Sandler writes for Fina from PEPs to ISAs next year. lation have no CGT liability. cial Adviser'

And those with CGT to pay may be able to "bed-and-breakfast" their holdings, that is to. sell and buy them back within the tax year, thereby diminishing their tax liability. Any such moves would depend on the post-March CGT rules. This strategy could be stymied if, for example, the Government dropped the individual allowance CGT allowance from the current £6,500, below which

individuals pay no tax. Meanwhile, PEP providers. worried that the uncertainty over the investment vehicle's future will put off investors, are trying to make products as attractive as they possibly can. to anyone taking out a PEP with them before the end of the tax year. Others, including Legal & General and Schroders, are stating that they will probably join them.

Many firms are guaranteeing existing customers that not only will they be able to convert their PEPs to ISAs free of charge, but if the £50,000 limit is retained, they will also strip get, and PEPs can often be the PEP wrapper off unit trusts or investment trusts for free. In other words, they will not impose any exit charge if the PEP is unwound rather than being transferred.

Berry Birch & Noble 01905 775333; Gartmore 0800 289336; General 0500 116622; M&G transfer sum, one strategy 01245 390390; Perpetual 01491 416123; Royal & Sun Alliance 0500 111333; Towry Law 0345

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Investment has never been simpler



Trackers have shown spectacular returns in the past year but, warns **Juliet Oxborrow**, investors should now spread their holdings

Keep track of the growth markets

AN EBULLIENT market in the better, partly because their return victory, a bull run on the US market and increased corporate activity, particularly among banks, have sent the shares of the brightest and biggest com-

panies from strength to strength. One of the best ways to access this growth has been through tracker funds. These are low-cost unit and investment trusts which mirror the growth in a stock market index by buying its constituent shares.

Over the year to the end of 1997, trackers like the Direct Line's FTSE 100 tracker, the HSBC Footsie Fund and Marks & Spencer 100 Companies returned around 22 per cent. This compared with an average for all UK-invested unit trusts of around 12 per cent, and clearly outpaced the 3 per cent average growth for internationally invested funds.

But financial advisers warn that the UK may not yield so much treasure from here on in. The UK is looking really overalued now," says Alastair Conway, of London independent financial advisers Clark Conway. "Investors should almost certainly be diversifying into other markets, particularly continental Europe where potential growth is far greater."

This view is reflected in the funds topping the performance league tables. The tables in the spring 1998 issue of What PEP magazine are dominated by funds investing in continental Europe (see table). Shares there are being bolstered by a benign interest-rate environment and the fact companies are striving to increase profitability in time for monetary union.

Funds investing in smaller VK companies are also garenering more interest now the mighty corporations of the FTSE 100 are looking pricey. Gartmore UK Smaller Companies is the top-performing "PEPoable" smaller company unit trust over five years. To the beginning of this month, it has posted a return of just over 281 per cent, compared with an average five-year return for

Some smaller company in-

can be pushed up by increased investor demand for their shares, as well as the performance of their underlying investments.

Shares in Foreign & Colonial Enterprise, a venture capital & development investment trust, have chalked up a staggering 528 per cent growth over five years, while Invesco English & International investment trust, which invests across a wide spread of mostly UK smaller companies, has returned 434 per

cent to PEP investors. Even so, advisers like Alasdair Conway still believe at least half of any PEP investor's UK exposure should be in larger companies. "Companies like Marks & Spencer are very stable and they are the first ones to bounce back. If the market gets nervous, they are less affected," he reasons.

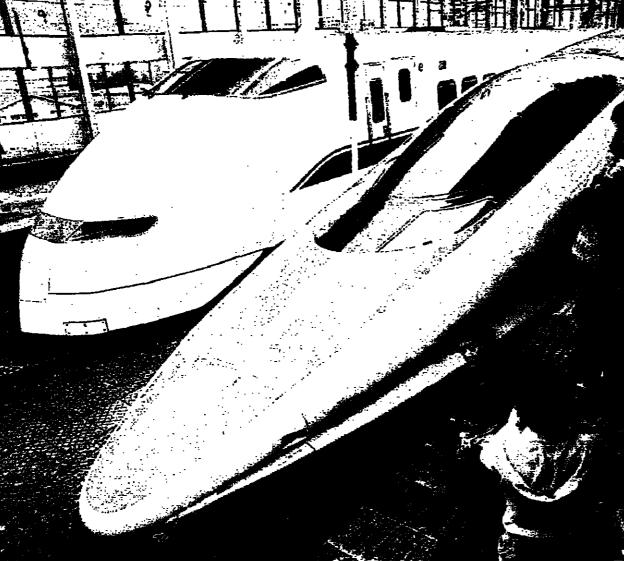
Amanda Davidson, of independent financial advisers Holden Meehan agrees. She says: "We particularly like the Schroder Enterprise unit trust because it has a good mix of British companies, even if it has become more oriented to smaller companies recently."

Both Alasdair Conway and Amanda Davidson recommend growth seekers to spread their PEP among different markets. Conway suggests, for example, that of the £6,000 PEP allowance, £3,000 should go into the UK, £1,500 into continental Europe and the rest in what he terms "something more exotic such as emerging markets in general or, for those willing to take a long-term view, the currently troubled markets of Japan and the Far East".

Young, developing stock markets such as Latin America and the Far East can offer very dynamic returns but to ride out events such as the crisis currently hitting the Far East you need to take a long-term view, say at least five-years.

For those interested, Alasdair Conway recommends looking at investment houses such as Schroder, Perpetual and Fidelity.

"The advantage of using these management groups is PEP unit trusts of 197 per cent. that they also have good UK and vestment trusts have done even a bit jittery you can move easily PEP' magazine



into safer markets without having to switch your PEP to a different fund manager," he says Meanwhile, PEP investors who want investment thrills

without the spills have a grow-

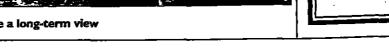
ing number of options.

Protected unit trusts, such as the Lloyds Bank Safety First Fund and NatWest Safeguard Fund, aim to limit losses in the event of a stock market meltdown by setting a floor on their fund's selling prices. Others guarantee to return all or most of your original investment at the end of fixed length of time,

European funds. So if things get Juliet Oxborrow is editor of What

even if the market falls.

Look to diversify: If you want to invest in Japanese markets take a long-term view



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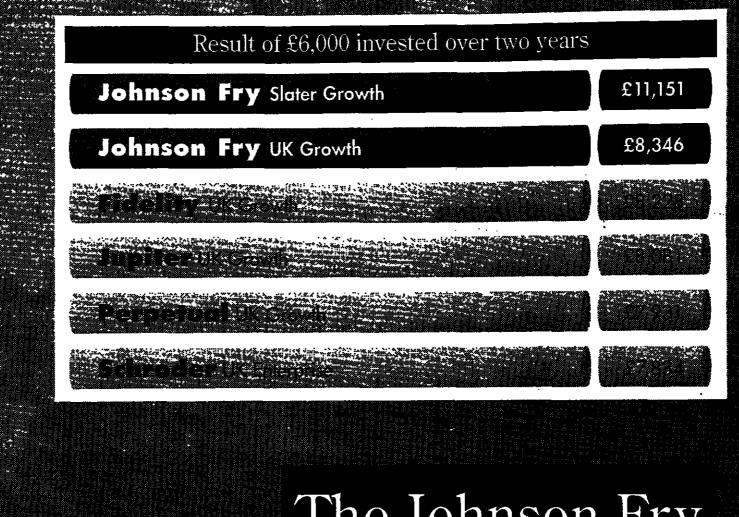
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Friedlander

PEPs into an ISA without paramy,
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21 November 1967. Over the five years to 51 December 1997, Johnson 17 y Sand Grown, jugace On Grown, Schroder Ok Enterprise by 147 098, 179, 168, 124, 168, 126, 158, and 123, 168, respectively. Since Jaunch on 11 October 1995 to 31 December 1997 Johnson E-	se, Perpetual UK Growth and Fidelity UK Growth have grown
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value of units and the income (if any) from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invested. Past initial charge you may lose money if you withdraw in the early years. You should regard an investment in the Trusts as a long term in	t performance is not a guide to future returns. Because of the

initial charge you may use money it you will trusts and may acquire shares in companies with relatively small market capitalisations and which may not be readily marketable. These factors may increase the risks of the Trust. PEPs and unit trusts may not be suitable investments for everyone and if you have any doubts you should seek independent advice before investing. The value of the current The risks of the 170st. First and that it does may not a season. A consultative paper recently issued by the Government on the new Individual Savings Account (ISA) will, if enacted in its current form, withdraw the tax reliefs available to PEPs from 5 October 1999. It is, however, proposed that PEPs and TESSAs up to a value of £50,000 per person may be transferred into ISAs. Data Protection Act 1984. Your name will be added to a mailing list which may be used by us or associated companies to keep you well informed of any new and existing products. If you prefer not to receive such details, please tick the box [

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Hill Samuel is launching a Com- its own range of unit trusts until plete Investment Account aimed April 1998, Call 0131 3131000. at maximising investors' exemption from Capital Gains Tax. The initial charge is 4 per cent, with an average annual charge of 1.5 per cent. Call 0171 2033064.

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The Mortgage Operation is offering a five year fixed mortgage pegged at 6.99 per cent, with option of £1,000 as a cashback or £400 cashback, plus free valuation, legal fees, the existing lender's reference paid and a refund of aptransfers from other managers into plication fees. Call 0171 5712400.

How to pick up a plan on the cheap

VIRTUALLY ALL PEP manadviser or intermediary who sells their plans to investors. This is typically a 3 per cent introductory commission, worth £180 on a £6,000 investment.

Competition is such, however, that a number of the brokers and other intermediaries are now offering executiononly services, where you get no advice on which is best for you, but you do get a discount on the cost of buying your PEP.

the PEP provider may think they will avoid the commission charge, but in fact they do not the manager is able to keep the commission for itself.

Companies such as Hargreaves Lansdown (0117-988 9880) and PEPwise (0345-573277) charge no fee for investing your money in a PEP and they fully refund any commission they receive. They make their living from any renewal commission in later years. which can be 0.5 per cent or you will need to go direct.

Financial Services, will split the commission with customers. Some discounters, such as PEPDirect (0800-413186), will refund all commission to the has no initial charge. customer but charge a £25 fee

offering. For example, Perpetual and Crédit Suisse are both Investors who go directly to offering a 2 per cent discount on their unit trust PEPs. PEPDirect will pass this directly on to customers. So on top of the 3 per cent commission refund, they would also receive

PEP provider, 5 per cent in all. exceptions, such as Equitable Life and Virgin. For their PEPs

Where there are no initial

Other discount brokers, such charges on a unit trust PEP, it agers pay commission to the as The PEP Superstore (0171- is unlikely there will be any 351 6022), part of Chelsea commission paid to introducing agents. But there are exceptions. Legal & General, for example, offers a unit trust PEP which tracks the All Share index and

You have decided which PEP you want. But, as Abigail Montrose explains, before you pay up, read on - it could save you pounds

Despite this, the manager still pays brokers and interme-Discount brokers are also diaries 0.75 per cent commission able to give you any special deals when they introduce business. which PEP providers may be Investors who invest £6,000 in this particular PEP through discount broker PEPwise are refunded the £45 commission plus the broker pays out an extra £15. Few investment trust PEPs

pay commission. "If you want to invest in one of these you usuthe 2 per cent discount from the ally have to go direct to the investment trust company," says Discount brokers only offer John Churn, technical support refunds when they themselves manager at PEPDirect. The receive commission. While minority of investment trust most unit trust houses pay com- PEP providers that do pay commission, there are some notable mission include Fidelity and Gartmore. When these are sold by a discounter, they will split any initial commission with the

Bargain hunting: Discount brokers can be cheaper than buying direct

phone round a few discounters until you find one that does sell to see if other PEP providers

Some fund managers are counters. Fidelity, for example, counters will offer you. Then (0500 691790).

count brokers offer corporate investor or one of its existing bond PEPs. Be prepared to direct clients is offered by a discount broker. You could try will offer a similar deal.

Additionally, not all dis- offers to match any deal a new call the PEP provider to see if they can match this and offer additional services too.

Other discount brokers include PEP Shop (0115 982 5105). Before you commit yourself. Seymour Sinclair (0171-935 starting to react to the dis- find out what deal the dis- 6445) and Elson Associates

To cash in on this, a couple

which qualify as both general

and single company PEPs.

These are managed funds, but

because they are listed on an

European Union stock market

they qualify for the single com-

A beginner's guide to selecting the right PEP

Interested in

managed, self-select or corporate plans?

Tony Bonsignore

looks the range of PEPs on offer

BY FAR the most popular type of PEP is the general PEP. This can invest in a wide variety of different vehicles from collective investments such as unit trusts and investment trusts through to corporate bonds

These are known as managed PEPs, and it this type of plan most often in the money pages of the national newspapers and on roadside billboards.

In a lot of these plans, the all your money in a particular fund or investment trust. For instance, invest £6,000 in a L&G Index Tracker PEP and all that money, minus charges, will then be invested into the L&G Tracking fund.

and ordinary company shares. you to invest in a number of to invest in a corporate PEP, stocks.

money will be invested in GT's wide range of companies. UK Key Trends fund, with the that you will see advertised remainder in the GT Global Dynamic Theme fund.

to choose between a range of brokers and independent fimanager automatically invests investments run by that nancial advisers.

PEP, which invests the full £6,000 in one company's shares. Usually intended to encourage share ownership among a firm's

The majority of general funds. An example of this is Bradford & Bingley and Halifax

For those wanting complete control over their PEP investments, however, they should Most managers also offer a choose a self-select PEP. These managed PEP that allows you are available from banks, stock-

Self-select PEPs allow you to A less common type of invest in whichever shares, unit general PEP is the corporate trusts, investment trusts or corporate bonds you choose. But they are intended for experienced investors only, given their higher dealing costs and Some managed PEPs allow employees, anyone can choose the risk of picking the wrong

Ian Millward, investment main advantage of single com-PEPs are linked to either unit GT's Global Thematic Growth both manage a large number of marketing manager at Chase de pany PEPs is that they can sit on top of your general PEP trusts or investment trusts. PEP, where 75 per cent of your this type of PEP on behalf of a Vere, says "We would advise entitlement. This means you can most people to go into managed invest up to a total of £9,000 in PEPs. The self-select PEP is only really suitable for the inопе tax уеат. vestor who thinks he can outof groups, including HSBC, have established companies on perform the market. But most armchair investors will not do the Dublin stock exchange

> if nothing else." The other main option is the single company PEP. This allows you to invest in just one company's shares up to a maximum of £3,000 each tax year.

as well, because of the charges

pany PEP. Some providers run "managed" single company PEPs. which decide which stock to Tony Bonsignore writes for invest in on your behalf. The 'Financial Adviser'

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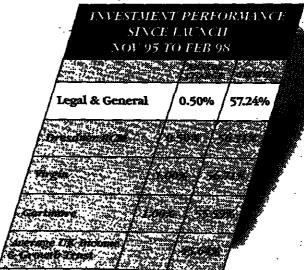
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Share in the benefits of collective share ownership

One lasting legacy of PEPs will have been to introduce many investors to the advantages of reducing risk by pooling their investments. Simon Read explains

NEW INVESTORS attracted by aggressive advertising from the likes of Virgin Direct and M&G have been rightly buying into unit trusts and investment trusts - but without necessarily understanding why.

The simple reason is that collective investments are less risky than direct investment in shares. This, in itself, makes them more attractive to cautious mvěstors.

Additionally, because the funds are run by professional fund managers, they allow individuals with little cash to get access to the kind of investment expertise which they wouldn't normally be able to afford.

Today, there are three different types of collective investment: unit trusts, investment trusts and open-ended investment companies - more commonly known as Oeics. They all offer the chance to spread the inherent risks involved in the stock market by investing in a sizeable bundle of different companies' shares, rather than just one.

All these collective investments reduce the risk by pooling several investors' cash to create large sums that can then be invested in a range of different shares. Then if one share drops in price it should have a limited effect on the rest of the portfolio, so that the overall

Unit trusts, investment trusts types of collective investment, each with its own advantages.

A unit trust is a fund split into equal units which can be bought and sold. The price of a unit fluctuates as it is directly leaves the investment decilinked to the value of the fund; if the fund is performing well, the unit price will be higher, and vice versa. The more investors you.' there are in a unit trust, the more units can be created.

There are 22 categories of unit trust with around 1,700

j -

ac ho



the markets' ups and downs

and Oeics are slightly different especially if you're new to the investment trust companies in equities game," says Emma Weiss of the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (Autif). "It's convenient, and cost-effective, and sions to the professionals, who have the time and expertise to lying performance of the in-

An investment trust is a company in which anyone can buy and sell shares. The cash raised from the sale of shares invest in the stock market, companies. There are now 335

the UK grouped in 24 different sectors but growth seekers have their own UK and international

However, unlike unit trusts, investment trust share prices are not directly linked to the undermake your money work for vestment portfolio. As with any equity, supply and demand will have a large influence on the share price as will the overall stock market sentiment; although, if the investment trust funds. "It's the easiest way to is in effect used to invest in other is performing well that will for information about invest-

popularity of its shares.

"Generally, investment trusts have a far better record of growth than any other collective form of investment over the long term and they have the advantage of low management charges," says Andrew Barker, chairman of the Association of Investment Trust Companies (AITC). "They are also quoted on the stock market, which means you can easily buy and sell their shares."

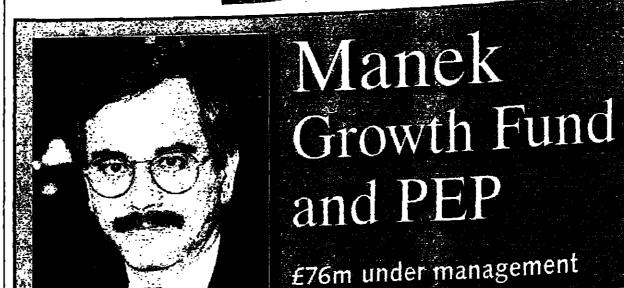
The Oeic only arrived on the UK investment scene last year and is a cross between its two older cousins. Ocics offer shares like investment trusts but are open-ended like unit trusts. This means that they can alter the number of shares they issue

to match demand. Consequently, their share price is based directly on the value of the fund, rather than bending with market sentiment as can happen with investment

Oeics are seen as the future of collective investment as they are reckoned to be more flexible and simpler to understand than either of their rival types of collective funds. However, few investment houses have taken up the Oeic challenge to

Not all unit trusts, investment trusts and Oeics are ailowed to be put into a personal equity plan to get tax advantages. Qualifying trusts must have at least 50 per cent of their funds invested in UK or EU quoted shares, bonds or convertibles. If you pick a nonqualifying trust, which must be invested in a stock market recognised by the Inland Revenue, you'll only be able to invest up to £1,500 in a PEP, rather than the £6,000 in a qualifying fund.

Contact Autif (0171-831 0898) for more information about investing in unit trusts and Oeics and the AITC (0171-431 5222) obviously be reflected in the ment trust companies.



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* Source: Micropal Ltd. buying price to selling price from 1.3.91 - 26.1.98, the UK Stockmarket Fund grew

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*Besed on an offer price of 62.78p on 06/02/98, the PEP will have been paying mouthly income at a rate eq hat past performance is not necessarily a guide to future returns. The price of units and income from them can go down at well as up, arent income levels may not be sustained and you may not get back what you invest. To maintain current income, potential for capital be foregone. Any significant change in interest rates would substantially affect the capital value of the fund. Securities held may have a ent value higher than their ultimate maturity value. The tex treatment of PEPs will be subject to statutory change in April 1999. At this time the

ne of tax swings and eligibility to invest will alter.

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Savings that don't lose their PEP

When considering investing in a PEP, it's easy to forget about charges. But, as Simon Read explains, this could be a costly mistake

CHARGES levied by PEP managers can make a real difference to your eventual gains. In fact, if the charges are too high, it could mean that your investment may never return its original value. If that sounds far-fetched, then consider that many PEP managers have initial charges as high as 5 per cent. This means £300 lost from a £6,000 investment.

If shares go through a dull patch, it could take some time for your investment to regain its original worth. In effect it needs to grow by 5 per cent to recover, and that's before considering any administration charges.

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charges are also important. Now, more than ever, charges

are to the fore: The weeks up to PEP business, especially as many the end of the tax year on 5 April others still make an initial charge are the most popular time for buying PEPs, as people try to make the most of their allowances be- also pared annual management fore the opportunity disappears. Accordingly, managers are of-

Nat West, for instance, has its unit trust PEPs. This could mean a saving of between £118

Wesleyan Financial Services, a life insurer which has expanded into PEPs, has also slashed initial charges on its Weslevan Growth unit trust from 4 to 3 per cent annual management charge on its product, which ranked 64th out of 136 funds in its sector in the year to February.

two for the price of one for those who take out an investment trust PEP with the group before the end of the tax year, and then another in the 1998/99 taxyear. The £50 initial charge on the second will be waived.

Fidelity, like many other manigers, has chosen to go the discount route by offering 1 per cent any one is markedly more exoff the mitial charge on its investment trust PEP range.

There are plenty of other offers, and many low-cost PEP managers simply point out that returns than anyone else. they have no initial charges. Companies such as Legal & General, check to see whether there are any

highly successful; these companies have attracted much of the new up to 5 per cent,

The low-cost providers have charges to the bone, Virgin Direct and Fidelity charge just 0.7 per fering discounts and special offers. cent a year, while Legal & General charges just 0.5 per cent. Most halved initial charges on eight of PEP managers make an annual charge of around 1.5 per cent.

The savings can be considerable if you choose a low-cost PEP. But is there a downside? Well, yes. The reason that companies such as Virgin Direct and Legal & General can afford to slash charges is because they've cut back cent. The company levies a 1.5 per on costs by cutting out fund management altogether.

Instead, they rely on funds that replicate average market performance. They do this by using Foreign & Colonial is offering tracker funds that simply buy all, or a representative sample, of the shares in a particular index, such as the FT-SE 100 or the All Share index. Many PEP managers have followed this route of no initial charges.

The average annual management charge for a PEP now stands at around 1.5 per cent. If pensive than this, you should only really consider buying into their PEP if you think they can offer remarkably better investment

The main factor when decid- Virgin Direct and Fidelity have exit charges. Some PEP managers ing on a PEP should be your view done away with up-front charges cut their mittal charges, only to slyof its likely performance. But in the last two years. This has been ly introduce exit charges. These penalise you if you take your cash out of their investment. M&G for instance is guilty of charging 4.5 per cent if you cash your PEP in before the year is out, although its charges drop year by year. Legal & General charges 5 per cent. Others simply charge a lump sum - Henderson, for example, charges £20.

One final point to watch out for is the bid/offer spread, the difference between the cost of buying and selling a PEP. For example, Royal & Sun Alliance is offering a low-cost tracker PEP with no initial charges and an annual management fee of just 0.3 per cent. But its bid/offer spread is 5.5 per cent, which negates the price advantage on offer, compared to Legal & General, at least.

One way to cut the impact of charges is to buy your PEP through a discount shop. All advisers earn commission from the PEP provider every time they sell a plan. In order to offer a discount, the brokers have been splitting the commission with customers, which significantly brings down

The Independent has published a free Guide to Making Your Investments Work for You'. The guide, by Steve Lodge, personal finance editor on The Independent on Sunday', is sponsored by Wesleyan Financial Services. It is available by calling 0800 Also when looking at PEPs, 1379749. Or fill in the coupon

Photograph: Hulton Desitsch

How to yield an income

income

THE chief ment of PEPs is that Tony Lyons and any income your plan generates is free of all income tax. You therefore earn more than you might obtain from high street bank and building society deposit accounts, albeit with some risk.

If you have a self-select PEP, you can go for companies that pay out high dividends. But watch out. High yield is by definition high risk.

If like most investors you opt for a general PEP and have your money managed professionally. you can look at high-yielding unit and investment trusts. But these days, most do not offer that high a yield. M&G Extra Income, one of the more popular high income unit trusts, currently yields under 4.5 per cent. This means that for every £100 invested, you can expect less than £4.50 in income.

But don't despair. Since July 1995, corporate bond PEPs have been available. There are now some 60 different ones on offer and most of them currently yield around 7 per cent or more.

Corporate bond PEPs, not to be confused with corporate PEPS which invest in a compaseen as safer investments than conventional plans.

They are lower risk because they invest in fixed-interest bonds and other securities issued by companies. But at the end of the day, the stock is only as good as the company that issues it. You would be right if you expected the yield on Marks & Spencer or BP to be lower than that of a small engineering company. The risk with a corporate bond portfolio is dependent on the mix of

Simon Read discuss one of the other key advantages of PEPs - boosting

different types of stock. The yield the PEP offers depends on the

fund manager's strategy. What they will all have in common is that they are set up to generate income. In effect they are fixed-interest bonds issued by companies to raise money. Investors are therefore lending a company money for a fixed time and receiving interest on the loan.

Convertibles are similar vehicles in that, like corporate bonds, they offer a fixed rate of interest, but also offer investors the chance to convert their option into shares. For that reason they offer lower returns than corporate bonds, but do have the extra potential of enjoying the capital growth associated with Convertibles have therefore often been promoted as a relatively low-risk entry

into the equity market. When comparing yields it's worth bearing in mind two things, the risks and the charges. There are often two yields quoted on corporate bond PEPs, the "running yield" and the "gross redemption yield".

The first relates to the current estimated level of income you'll get, but this can be misleading

TAX-FREE PEP

any capital gains or losses. The notion of capital rising or falling in this type of investment may seem confusing, but that's because while there may be fixed interest on offer, there is no guarantee on the capital. Bond prices go up and down according to the prevailing market conditions. The timing of buying and selling can affect the return. So don't be fooled by advertisements of "guaranteed" income or yield, which hide the fact that

your capital may be at risk. Gross redemption yield in fact gives a better indication of the return on your investment in a corporate bond PEP as it takes into account gains or losses on capital, as well as income.

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How should you choose a corporate bond PEP? Obviously the yield is important but you should also take into account charges. High charges will erode your capital quite quickly whereas in an equity-linked PEP, the growth should offset this.

Some managers still make an initial charge of up to 5 per cent.

The annual charge is important as you will have to pay it each year. This ranges between 0.5 and 1.25 per cent, with most be-

ing under 1 per cent. But watch out. Some managers boost the income generated by their fund at the expense of investors' capital. They can do this by taking their management charges out of capital rather than out of income generated.

As corporate bonds will only give modest capital gains, if any, when compared with ordinary shares, this way of taking out anbecause it takes no account of nual charges can erode capital.



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